# Encounter

December 1975 50p

**Colin Clark**
The Remedy for Inflation

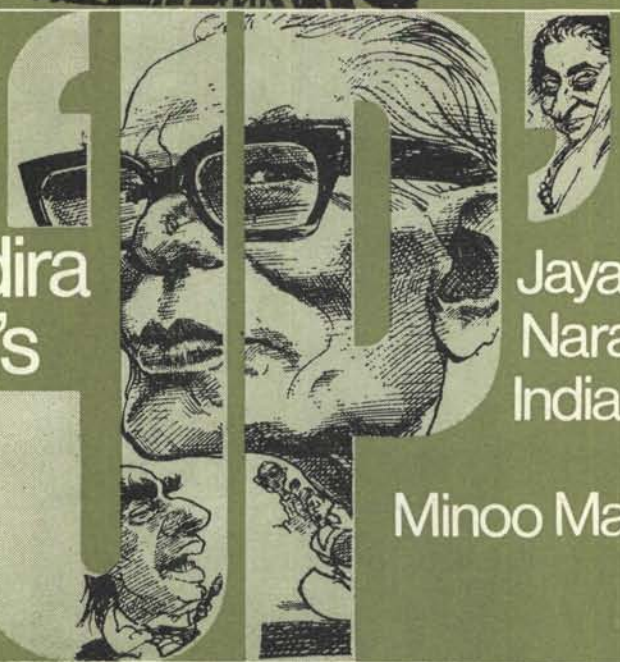
**John McGahern**
Story

**John Weightman**
Phaedra Britannica

**F R Allemann**
Portugal's Revolution

## A Silence is Broken in Bayreuth

**Winifred, Wahnfried, Wagner**



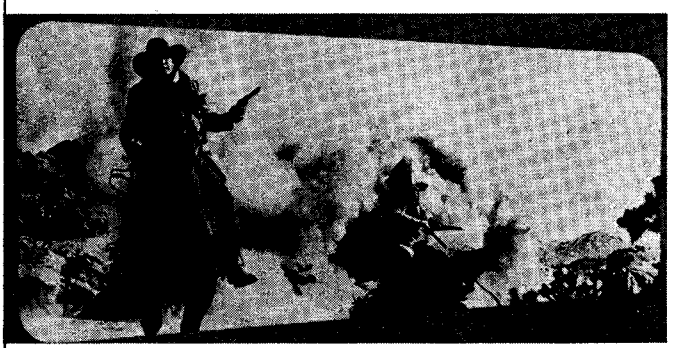
## Indira Gandhi's Prisoner

## Jayaprakash Narayan & the Indian Crisis

Minoo Masani

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Make yourself at home while we take you abroad.



Picture by courtesy of United Artists

## The world's most experienced airline

**Watch a movie or two.** When you fly Pan Am, you can have as much – or as little – entertainment as you please. There's always a choice of two films* – at least one of which is often pre-release. We let you know in advance which films will be shown on your flight, and there's a special 'film-free' area in our 747s in case you would rather sleep or read. We've got non-stop music,* too ... eight different channels to suit every mood.

**Choose your seat.** By the window or next to the aisle. Smoking or non-smoking. Just tell us when you book. Whichever seat you settle for, you'll really be able to stretch your legs, because Pan Am fly more big, comfortable 747s to more places than any other airline.

**Choose your meals.** When you fly Pan Am, you have a choice of three delicious meals in Economy. With, if you like, wines and spirits. If you're travelling First Class, reserve a seat in our Dining Room on the upper deck, and enjoy the highest of haute cuisine at no extra cost.

**Feel at home even after you arrive.** With offices in 120 cities world-wide, Pan Am's welcome service doesn't stop when you step off the plane. We'll book your cars and hotels, and we'll hold your mail, and we'll help in any way we can to make you feel at home – wherever you go.

Talk to your Travel Agent, or ring us direct at Pan Am. We're at home on 01-734 7292.

Telephone: Birmingham 021-236 9561/2/3
Glasgow 041-248 5744
Manchester 061-832 7626

**Regulations require a nominal charge for entertainment.

PAN AM®

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Encounter

DECEMBER 1975

VOL. XLV NO. 6

*Edited by* MELVIN J. LASKY *and* ANTHONY THWAITE
MANAGING EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley.* ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Bryan Healing.*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Anthony Robinson.* ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: *John Hall.*
ADVISORY BOARD: *Maurice Cranston, D. J. Enright, Anthony Hartley, Leo Labedz, Goronwy Rees, Edward Shils, John Weightman.*
PUBLISHING ADVISERS: *Lord Ardwick, Blouke Carus (Chairman), Lord Cudlipp, Cecil Harmsworth King, Leon Levy, Jack Watmough.*
*Published monthly by Encounter Ltd. (in association with the Open Court Publishing Co.).*
*Per copy: UK 50p: USA & Canada $1.25: Back numbers 65p ($2.00).*
*Annual subscription: UK £5.50: USA & Canada $14.00 (by air $15.50): Elsewhere £6.75.*
*Address for all Departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).*
*N. American Subscription Office: 1545 Argyle Road, LaSalle, Illinois 61301.*
*US news-stand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. P.O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.*
*Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.*
*Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.* ©*1975 by Encounter Ltd.*
*Manuscripts are only returned if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp or International Reply Coupons).*



ALL SORTS OF IMPOSSIBLE THINGS *(story)* 3 *John McGahern*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN 10 *Minoo Masani*

WINIFRED, WAHNFRIED, WAGNER 33 *Wolf Donner*

THE REMEDY FOR INFLATION 40 *Colin Clark*

**THEATRE**

PHAEDRA VICTORIANA 46 *John Weightman*

**AMERICAN CHRONICLE**

BICENTENNIAL BLUES 51 *Stephen Miller*

**POETRY**

*Gerda Mayer* 9, *Geoffrey Grigson* 37, *Andrew Waterman* 38, *Gavin Ewart* 39, *Robin Fulton* 54, *Christopher Wiseman* 90

**NOTES & TOPICS**

ARGUING ABOUT FASCISM 55 *François Bondy*

**BOOKS & WRITERS**

D. H. LAWRENCE & BIOGRAPHY 58 *Robert Gittings*

THE SURVIVAL OF DR LEAVIS 65 *Roy Fuller*

DO POETS TELL THE TRUTH? 68 *Anthony Thwaite*

THE NOVELIST AS DICTATOR 73 *John Spurling*

**POINTS OF THE COMPASS**

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION 80 *F. R. Allemann*

**DOCUMENTS**

*Words, Words, Words (II) (D. J. Enright)* 92

**LETTERS** 91

**AUTHORS** 96



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Critics Choice

*Announcing the publication of*

## ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO (Volume II)

*To be published December 1st* £4.95

*Nobel Prizewinner*

## ANDREI D. SAKHAROV

MY COUNTRY AND THE WORLD

*To be published December 1st* £2.25

## VALERY CHALIDZE

TO DEFEND THESE RIGHTS

£4.00

## ALEXANDER DOLGUN:

AN AMERICAN IN THE GULAG

£4.50

## EVELYN WAUGH

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

£5.50 *Collins*

## LORD HAILSHAM

THE DOOR WHEREIN I WENT

£4.95 *Collins*

COLLINS/HARVILL


PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## *John McGahern*

# *All Sorts of Impossible Things*

THEY WERE OUT COURSING the hounds on Sunday a last time together but they did not know it, the two friends, James Sharkey and Tom Lennon, a teacher and an agricultural instructor. The weak winter sun had thawed the fields soft enough to course the hounds on, and though it still hung blood-orange above the hawthorns on the hill the rims of the hoof tracks were already hardening fast against their tread.

The hounds walked beside them on slip leashes: a pure-bred fawn bitch that had raced under the name of Coolcarra Queen, reaching the Final of the Rockingham Stakes the season before; and a wire-haired mongrel, no more than half-hound, that the schoolmaster, James Sharkey, borrowed from Charlie's bar for these Sundays. They'd been beating up the bottoms for some hours, and odd snipe, exploding out of the rushes before zigzagging away, was all that had risen.

"If we don't rise something before long we'll soon have to throw our hats at it", Tom Lennon said, and it was a careless phrase. No one had seen the teacher without his eternal brown hat for the past twenty years. "I've been noticing the ground harden all right", the dry answer came.

"Anyhow, I'm beginning to feel a bit humped." Tom Lennon looked small and frail in the tightly belted white raincoat.

"There's no use rimming it, then. There'll be other Sundays."

Suddenly a large hare rose ahead, bounded to the edge of the rushes, and then looped high to watch and listen. With a "Hulla, hulla", they slipped the hounds, the hare racing for the side of the hill. The fawn bitch led, moving in one beautiful killing line as she closed with the hare, the head eel-like as it struck; but the hare twisted away from the teeth, and her speed carried the fawn past. The hare had to turn again a second time as the mongrel coming up from behind tried to pick it in the turn. The two men below in the rushes watched in silence as the old dance played itself out on the bare side of the hill: race, turn, race again; the hounds hunting well together, the mongrel making up with cunning what he lacked in grace, pacing himself to strike when the hare was most vulnerable—turning back from the fawn. But with every fresh turn the hare gained, the hounds slithering past on the hard ground. They were utterly beaten by the time the hare left them, going away through the hedge of whitethorns.

"They picked a warrior there."

"That's for sure", Tom Lennon answered as quietly.

The beaten hounds came disconsolately down, pausing at the foot of the hill to lap water from a wheelmark and to lick their paws. They came on towards the men. The paws were bleeding and some of the bitch's nails were broken.

"Maybe we shouldn't have raced her on such hard ground", the teacher said by way of apology.

"That's no difference. She'll never run in the Stakes again. They say there's only two kinds to have—a proper dud or a champion. Her kind, the in-between, are the very worst. They'll always run well enough to tempt you into having another go. Anyhow, there's not the money for that any more", he said with a sad smile of reflection.

Coolcarra Queen was a relic of his bachelor days that he hadn't been able to bear parting with on getting married and first coming to the place as temporary agricultural instructor. They'd raced her in the Stakes. She'd almost



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

won. They'd trained her together, turn and turn about. And that cold wet evening, the light failing as they ran off the Finals, they'd stood together in the mud beside the net of torn hares and watched this hare escape into the laurels that camouflaged the pen, and the judge gallop towards the rope on the old fat horse, and stop, and lift the white kerchief instead of the red. Coolcarra Queen had lost the Rockingham Silver cup and twenty-five pounds after winning the four races that had taken her to the Final.

"Still, she gave us a run for our money", the teacher said as they put the limping hounds on the leashes and turned home.

"Well, it's over now", Tom Lennon said. "Especially with the price of steak."

"Your exams can't be far off now?" the teacher said as they walked. The exams he alluded to were to determine whether the instructor should be made permanent or let go.

"In less than five weeks. The week after Easter."

"Are you anxious about it all?"

"Of course", he said sadly. "If they make me permanent I get paid whether I'm sick or well. They can't get rid of me then. Temporary is only all right while you're single."

"Do you foresee any snags?"

"Not in the exams. I know as much as they'll know. It's the medical I'm afraid of."

"Still", the teacher began lamely and couldn't go on. He knew that through some freak the instructor had been born with his heart on the wrong side and it was weak.

"Not that they'll pay much heed to instruction round here. Last week I came on a pair of gentlemen during my rounds. They'd roped a horse-mower to a brand new Ferguson. One was driving the Ferguson, the other sitting up behind on the horse machine, lifting and letting down the blade with a piece of wire. They were cutting thistles."

"That's the form all right", the teacher smiled.

They'd left the fields and had come to the stone bridge into the village. Only one goal-post stood upright in the football field. Below them the sluggish Shannon flowed between its wheaten reeds.

"Still, we must have walked a good twelve miles today from one field to the next. While if we'd to walk that distance along a straight line of road it'd seem a terrible journey."

"A bit like life itself", the teacher laughed sarcastically, adjusting the brown hat firmly on his head. "We might never manage it if we had to take it all in the one gasp. We mightn't even manage to finish it."

"Well, it'd be finished for us then", the instructor countered weakly.

"Do you feel like coming to Charlie's for a glass?" he asked as they stood.

"I told her I'd be back for the dinner. If I'm in time for the dinner she might have something even better for me afterwards", Tom Lennon joked defensively.

"She might indeed. Well, I have to take this towser back to Charlie anyhow. Thanks for the day."

"Thanks yourself", Tom Lennon said.

ABOVE THE ARMS of the stone wall the teacher watched the frail little instructor turn up the avenue towards the Bawn, a straggling rectangular building partly visible through the bare trees, where he had rooms in the tower, all that was left of the old Hall.

Charlie was on his stool behind the bar with the Sunday paper when the teacher came with the mongrel through the partition. Otherwise the bar and shop were empty.

"Did yous catch anything?" he yawned as he put aside the paper, drawing the back of his hands over his eyes like a child. There was a dark stain of hair oil behind him on the whitewash where sometimes he leaned his head and slept when the bar was empty.

"We roused only one and he slipped them."

"I'm thinking there's only the warriors left by this time of year", he laughed, and when he laughed the tip of his red nose curled up in a way that caused the teacher to smile with affection.

"I suppose I'll let the old towser out the back?"

Charlie nodded. "I'll get one of the children to throw him some food later." When the door was closed again he said in a hushed, solicitous voice, "I suppose, master, it'll be whiskey?"

"A large one, Charlie", the teacher said.

In a delicious glow of tiredness from the walking, and the sensuous burning of the whiskey as it went down, he was almost mindless in the shuttle back and forth of talk

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

until he saw Charlie go utterly still. He was following each move his wife made at the other end of the house. The face was beautiful in its concentration, reflecting each move or noise she made as clearly as water will the drifting clouds. When he was satisfied that there was no sudden danger of her coming up to the bar he turned to the shelves. Though the teacher could not see past the broad back, he had witnessed the little subterfuge so often that he could follow it in exact detail: the silent unscrewing of the bottle cap, the quick tip of the whiskey into the glass, the silent putting back of the cap, and the downing of the whiskey in one gulp, the movements so practised that it took but seconds. Coughing violently, he turned and ran the water and drank the glass of water into the coughing. While he waited for the coughing to die, he rearranged bottles on the shelves. The teacher was so intimate with the little subterfuge that he might as well have taken part in the act of murder or of love. "If I'm home in time for the dinner she might have something even better for me afterwards", he remembered with resentment.

"Tom didn't come with you?" Charlie asked as soon as he brought the fit of coughing under control.

"No. He was done in with the walking and the wife was expecting him."

"They say he's coming up for permanent soon. Do you think he will have any trouble?"

"The most thing he's afraid of is the medical."

Charlie was silent for a while, and then he said, "It's a quare caper that, isn't it, the heart on the wrong side?"

"There's many a quare caper, Charlie", the teacher replied. "Life itself is a quare caper if you ask me."

"But what'll he do if he doesn't get permanent?"

"What'll we all do, Charlie?" the teacher said inwardly, and as always when driven in to reflect on his own life instinctively fixed the brown hat more firmly on his head.

ONCE HE DID NOT BOTHER to wear a hat or a cap over his thick curly fair hair even when it was raining. And he was in love then with Cathleen O'Neill. They'd thought time would wait for them forever as they went to the sea in his baby Austin or to dances after spending Sundays on the river. And then, suddenly, his hair began to fall out. Anxiety exasperated desire to a passion, the passion to secure his life as he felt it all slip away, to moor it to the woman he loved. Now it was her turn to linger. She would not marry him and she would not let him go.

"Will you marry me or not? I want an answer one way or the other this evening." He felt his whole life like a stone on the edge of a boat out on water.

"What if I don't want to answer?" They were both proud and iron-willed.

"Then I'll take it as no."

"You'll have to take it whatever way you want, then." Her face was flushed with resentment.

"Goodbye, then." He steeled himself to turn away.

Twice he almost paused but no voice calling him back came. At the open iron gate above the stream he did pause. "If I cross it here it is the end. Anything is better than the anguish of uncertainty. If I cross here I cannot turn back even if she should want." He counted till ten, and looked back, but her back was turned, walking slowly uphill to the house. As she passed through the gate he felt a tearing that broke as an inaudible cry.

No one ever saw him afterwards without his brown hat and there was great scandal the first Sunday he wore it in the body of the church. The man kneeling next to him nudged him, gestured with his thumb at the hat, but the teacher did not even move. Whispers and titters and one hysterical whinny of laughter that set off a general sneeze ran through the congregation as he unflinchingly wore it through the service.

The priest was up to the school just before hometime the very next day. They let the children home early.

"Have you seen Miss O'Neill recently, Jim?" the priest opened cautiously, for he liked the young teacher, the most intelligent and competent he had.

"No, father. That business is finished."

"There'd be no point in me putting in a word?"

"There'd be no point, father."

"I'm sorry to hear that. It's no surprise. Everything gets round these parts in a shape."

"In a shape, certainly, father." There was

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dry mockery in the voice.

"When it gets wild it is different, when you hear talk of nothing else—and that's what has brought me up. What's going the rounds now is that you wore your hat all through Mass yesterday."

"They were right for once, father."

"I'm amazed."

"Why, father?"

"You're an intelligent man. You know you can't do that, Jim."

"Why not, father?"

"You don't need me to tell you that it'd appear as an extreme form of disrespect."

"If the church can't include my old brown hat, it can't include very much, can it, father?"

"You know that and I know that, but we both know that the outward shows may least belie themselves. It'd not be tolerated."

"It'll have to be tolerated, father, or. . . ."

"You can't be that mad. I know you're the most intelligent man round here."

"Thanks, father. All votes in that direction count round here. 'They said I was mad and I said they were mad and confound them they outvoted me' ", he quoted. "That's about it, isn't it, father?"

"Ah, stop it, Jim. Tell me why. Seriously, tell me why."

"You may have noticed recently, father", he began slowly, in rueful mockery, "a certain manifestation that my youth is ended. Namely, that I'm almost bald. It had the effect of *timor mortis*. So I decided to cover it up."

"Many lose their hair. Bald or grey, what does it matter? We all go that way."

"So?"

"When I look down from the altar on Sunday half the heads on the men's side are bald."

"The women must cover their crowning glory and the men must expose their lack of a crown. So that's the old church in her wisdom bringing us all to heel?"

"I can't understand all this fooling, Jim."

"I'm deadly serious. I'll wear my hat in the same way as you wear your collar, father."

"But that's nonsense. It's completely different."

"Your collar is the sublimation of *timor mortis*, what else is it, in Jesus Christ. All I'm asking is to cover it up."

"But you can't wear it all the time?"

"Maybe not in bed but that's different."

"Listen. This joking has gone far enough. I don't care where you wear your hat. That's your problem. But if you wear it in church you make it my problem."

"Well, you'll have to do something about it then, father."

The priest went very silent but when he spoke all he said was: "Why don't we lock up the school? We can walk down the road together."

The problem that faced the young priest was alarmingly simple: he couldn't have James Sharkey at Mass with his hat on and he couldn't have one of his teachers not at Sunday Mass. Only late that night did a glimmer of a solution come to him. Every second Sunday the teacher collected coins from the people entering the church at a table just inside the door. If the collection table was moved out to the porch and Sharkey agreed to collect the coins every Sunday, perhaps he could still make his observances while keeping his infernal hat on. The next morning he went to the administrator.

"By luck we seem to have hit on a solution", he was able to explain to the teacher that evening.

"That's fine with me. I never wanted to be awkward", the teacher said.

"You never wanted to be awkward", the priest exploded. "You should have heard me trying to convince the administrator this morning that it was better to move the table out into the porch than to move you out of the school. I've never seen a man so angry in my life. You'd have got short shrift, I'm telling you, if you were in his end of the parish. Tell me, tell me what would you have done if the administrator had got his way and fired you?"

"I'd have got by somehow. Others do", he answered.

And soon people had got so used to the gaunt face under the brown hat behind the collection table every Sunday that they'd be as shocked now to see him without it after all the years as they had been on the first Sunday he wore it.

"THAT'S RIGHT, Charlie. What'll we all do?" he repeated as he finished the whiskey beside the oil heater. "Here. Give us

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another drop before the crowd start to come in and I get caught."

"My brown hat and his heart on the wrong side and you tippling away secretly when the whole parish including your wife knows it. It's a quare caper indeed, Charlie", he thought silently as he quickly finished his whiskey to avoid getting caught by the crowd due to come in.

THERE WAS NO MORE COURSING together again after that Sunday. The doctor's car was parked a long time outside the white gate that led to the Bawn the next day, and when Tom Lennon's old Ford wasn't seen around the roads that day or the next or the next the teacher went to visit him, taking a half bottle of whiskey. Lennon's young wife, a warm soft country girl of few words, let him in.

"How is he?" he asked.

"The doctor'll be out again tomorrow", she answered timidly and let him up the creaky narrow stairs. "He'll be delighted to see you. He gets depressed not being able to be up and about."

From the circular room of the tower that they used as a living room he could hear happy gurgles of the baby as they climbed the stairs, and as soon as she showed him into the bedroom she left. In the pile of bedclothes Tom Lennon looked smaller and more frail than he usually did.

"How is the patient?"

"Fed up", he said. "It's great to see a face after staring all day at the ceiling."

"What is it?"

"The old ticker. As soon as I'd eaten after getting home on Sunday it started playing me up. Maybe I overdid the walking. Still, it could be worse. It'd be a damned sight worse if it had happened in five weeks' time. Then we'd be properly in the soup."

"You have oodles of time to be fit for the exam", the teacher said, hiding his dismay by putting the whiskey down on the dressing table. "I brought this little something." There was, he somehow felt, a bloom of death in the room.

"You never know", the instructor said some hours later as the teacher took his leave. "I'm hoping the doctor'll have me up tomorrow." He'd drunk only a little of the whiskey in a punch his wife had made while the hatted man on the chair had slowly finished his own half-bottle neat.

THE DOCTOR did not allow him up that week or the next, and the teacher began to come every evening to the house, and two Sundays later he asked to take the hounds out on his own. He did not cross the bridge to the Plains as they'd done the Sunday together but went along the river to Doireen. The sedge of the long lowlands rested wheaten and dull between two hills of hazel and briar in the warm day. All winter it had been flooded but the pale dead grass now crackled under his feet like tinder. He beat along the edges of the hills, feeling that the hares might have come out of the scrub to sleep in the sun, and as he beat he began to feel Tom Lennon's absence like his own lengthening shadow on the pale sedge.

The first hare didn't get more than halfway from where it was lying to the cover of the scrub before the fawn's speed caught it, a flash of white belly fur as it rolled over, not being able to turn away from the teeth in the long sedge, and the terror of its crying as both hounds tore it began. He wrested the hare loose and stilled the weird child-like crying with one blow. Soon afterwards a second hare fell in the same way. From several parts of the river lowland he saw hares looping slowly out of the warm sun into the safety of the scrub. He knew they'd all have gone in then, and he turned back for Charlie's. He gave one of the hares to Charlie; the other he skinned and took with him to Tom Lennon's.

"Do you know what I am thinking?" he said that night. "I'm thinking that I should take the bitch."

He saw sudden fear in the sick man's eyes. "You know you're always welcome to borrow her any time you want."

"It's not that", he said quickly. "I thought just to take her until you're better. I could feed her. It'd be no trouble. It'd take some of the weight off the wife." And that evening when he left he took the bitch who was excited, thinking, though it was dark, that she was going hunting again, and rose to put paws on his shoulders and to lick his face.

She settled easily in with the teacher. He

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made a house for her out of a scrapped Ford in the garden but he still let her sleep in the house, and there was a lighter spring in his walk each evening he left school, knowing the excitement with which he'd be met as soon as he got home. At night he listened to Tom Lennon's increasingly feverish grumblings as the exam drew closer. And he looked so angry and ill the night after the doctor had told him he could put all thought of the exam out of his mind that the suspicion grew stronger in the teacher's mind that his friend might not after all be just ill.

"What are you going to do?" he asked fearfully.

"Do the exam, of course." There was determination as well as fear in the sunken eyes.

"But you can't do it if the doctor said you weren't fit."

"Let's put it this way", the sick man laughed in harsh triumph. "I can't *not* do it."

The night before the exam he asked the teacher to bring up the clippers. He wanted a haircut. And that night as the teacher wrapped the towel round the instructor's neck and took the bright clippers out of their pale green cardboard box, adjusting the combs, and started to clip, the black hair dribbling down on the towel, he felt for the first time ever a mad desire to remove his hat and stand bareheaded in the room, as if for the first time in years he felt himself in the presence of something sacred.

"That's a great job", Tom Lennon said afterwards. "You know, while we're at it, I might as well go the whole hog, and shave as well."

"Do you want me to get you some hot water?"

"That wouldn't be too much trouble?"

"No trouble at all."

Downstairs, as they waited for the water to boil, the wife in her quiet voice asked him, "What do you think?"

"He seems determined on it. I tried to talk him out of it but it was no use."

"No. It doesn't seem any use", she said. A starched white shirt and blue suit and tie were draped across a chair one side of the fire.

The teacher sat on the bed's edge and held the bowl of water steady while the instructor shaved. When he finished, he examined himself carefully in the little hand-mirror and joked, "It's as good as for a wedding."

"Maybe it's too risky. Maybe you should send in a certificate. There'll be another chance."

"No. That's finished. I'm going through with it. It's my last chance. There'll be no other chance. If I manage to get made permanent there'd be a weight off my mind and I'd be better than a hundred doctors and tonics."

"Maybe I should give the old car a swing in readiness for the morning, so?"

"That'd be great." The instructor fumbled for his car keys in his trouser pockets on the bed rail.

The engine was cold but started on the sixth or seventh swing. In the cold starlit night he stood and listened to the engine run. "Good luck, old Tom", he said quietly as he switched it off and took the car keys in.

"Well, good luck tomorrow. I hope all goes well. I'll be up as soon as I see the car back to find out how it went", he said in a singsong voice he used with the children to avoid feeling after telling him that the Ford was running like a bird.

TOM LENNON rose the next morning as he said he would, dressed in his best clothes, had tea, told his wife not to worry and that he'd be back about six, somehow got as far as the car, and fell dead over the starting handle the teacher had left in the engine from the previous night.

When word was brought to the school, all the hatted man did was bow his head and murmur, "Thanks." He knew he'd been expecting the death for some days. And when he went to the Bawn a last time he felt no terror of the stillness of the brown habit, the folded hands, but only a certain amazement that it was the agricultural instructor who was lying there and not he. Two days later his hat stood calmly among the scarved women and bareheaded men about the open grave, and when it was over he went back to Charlie's. The bar was filled with mourners from the funeral making holiday. A silence seemed to fall as the brown hat came through the partition, but only for a moment. They were arguing about a method of sowing winter wheat that the dead man used to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

advocate. Some thought it made sense. Others said it would turn out to be a disaster.

"Your old friend won't hunt again", Charlie said as he handed him the whiskey. The voice was hushed. The eyes stared inquiringly but respectfully into the gaunt face beneath the hat. The small red curl of the nose was still.

"No. He'll not hunt again."

"They say herself and the child is going home with her own people this evening. They'll send a van up later for the furniture." His voice was low as a whisper at the corner of the bar.

"That makes sense", the teacher said.

"You have the bitch still?" Charlie asked.

"That's right. I'll be glad to keep her, but the wife may want to take her with her."

"That'll be the least of her troubles. She'll not want."

"Will you have something yourself?" the teacher invited.

"All right then, master", he paused suddenly. "A quick one then. We all need a little something in the open today", and he smiled an apologetic, rueful smile in his small eyes; but he downed the whiskey, as quickly running a glass of water and drinking it into the coughing, as if it hadn't been in the open at all.

THE FAWN jumped in her excitement on her new master when he finally came home from the funeral. As he petted her down, gripping her neck, bringing his own face down to hers, thinking how he had come by her, he felt the same rush of feeling as he'd felt when he watched the locks of hair fall on to the towel round the neck in the room, but instead of prayer he now felt a wild longing to throw his hat away and walk round the world bareheaded, find some girl, not necessarily Cathleen O'Neill but any young girl, and go to the sea with her as he used, leave the car at the harbour wall and take the boat for the island, the engine beating like a good heart under the deck boards as the waves rocked it on turning out of the harbour, hold her in one long embrace all night between the hotel sheets; or train the fawn again, feed her the best steak from town, walk her four miles every day for months, stand in the mud and rain again and see her as Coolcarra Queen race through the field in the Rockingham Stakes, see the judge gallop over to the rope on the old fat horse and this time lift high the red kerchief to give the Silver Cup to Coolcarra Queen.

And until he calmed, and went into the house, his mind raced with desire for all sorts of such impossible things.

## The Agnostic's Prayer

God, to whom I'm still inclined to
Say my prayers, though God knows why,
Guard me, if you have a mind to,
While I here abandoned lie.

I depend on your good nature;
Irony leads me astray.
Save the world, God, save your creatures,
Save us for the rainy day.

Thank you for your grace and favour,
Though the memory's remote.
Keep my cat safe, keep my neighbour's,
Keep them from each other's throat.

*Gerda Mayer*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Minoo Masani*

# Jayaprakash Narayan

## *A Personal Portrait of Indira Gandhi's Prisoner*

### *The Battle of Patna*

THE DAY may well prove to be a major turning point in independent India's history. What the capital of Bihar witnessed on that day, 4 November 1974, was a massive show of armed might never witnessed before even during the most repressive phases of the British raj. Thousands of policemen were deployed in the city and around it. All accesses to Patna were sealed and kept under the strictest surveillance. Trains, steamers and buses to the city were cancelled, virtually cutting off Patna from the rest of Bihar and India.

What was the colossal threat which the State and the Central government were trying to meet? Was an armed invasion from an alien power anticipated? Was civil war expected to break out? Was it felt that insurgents, traitors and enemies of the State would attempt a *coup d'état* using sophisticated weapons and guerrilla tactics? What battle was expected to be fought in Patna and against whom?

The massive might of armed policemen was being deployed against an ageing Gandhian of seventy-one who had threatened to besiege Bihar's discredited Ministers and legislators demanding a dissolution of the State's legislature as it had long lost the confidence of the people of Bihar. He was no Che Guevara nor even a Charu Muzumdar. Nor were his followers armed rebels. He was a man whose commitment to non-violence and democracy was not questioned by any Indian (save those in the Establishment). He was also a man whose role as a freedom-fighter could not be questioned by any objective historian of India's struggle for independence. His followers were students and hundreds of thousands of the common people of Bihar. He had declared a war against corruption in high office, against administrative apathy and arrogance, against manipulative malpractices which robbed the people of his State of food, freedom and justice.

It was an unusual battle fought against a government which has usurped more power than any other government elected by the people of India since the inauguration of its Constitution on 26 January 1950. It pitted Jayaprakash Narayan directly against Indira Gandhi, and no two public personalities can present a greater contrast.

MRS GANDHI, now fifty-seven, was at the peak of her power with every administrative lever in the country at her personal command. Returned to power with a big parliamentary majority in 1971 under the simple, effective slogan of *garibi hatao* (abolish poverty), having later humbled Pakistan and helped the rise of Bangladesh, having recently crushed a railwaymen's strike during which she also chose to explode India's first nuclear device, Mrs Gandhi apparently enjoyed an image of unassailable power which she loved to demonstrate on every occasion.

On the other hand, J.P.—as millions of Indians affectionately call him—was a frail man of seventy-one whose health had met with many major reverses, who had recently lost his wife who had been a personal bridge between him and Mahatma Gandhi, and who had dedicated his life to the Sarvodaya movement which aims

THIS *text was first written, and printed, in India in the weeks preceding Indira Gandhi's sudden declaration last June of an "Emergency" which suspended constitutional government.* JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN *was arrested in the first sweep on opposition leaders and is still being held incommunicado in prison. No word from him has as yet been able to filter through the new dictatorial censorship.* MINOO MASANI, *author of this article, has been one of India's leading political figures and intellectuals for three decades. His friendly, warm-hearted, if not uncritical, portrait of his old comrade-in-arms—they were both youthful Marxist rebels in the early Gandhian struggles for national independence—illuminates the tragic dilemmas not only of India but for the whole Third World overshadowed by new authoritarianism and old poverty.*



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the moral and material emancipation of every man. J.P. had renounced party politics and could not be accused of even remotely nursing any personal ambition. These, then, were the two "generals" who fought the Battle of Patna on 4 November.

And now the rival armies. Indira Gandhi's commanders at the front included the Bihar Cabinet led by Abdul Ghafoor, leaders of the ruling party in Bihar, and the Communist Party of India—her minor partners in a united front who always make major political gains at the expense of a majority of her Congressmen and, perhaps, ultimately at her cost. Mrs Gandhi, advised by her commanders in New Delhi and Patna, had consented to a plan of crushing J.P.'s intended *mahagherao* of 4 November.

On J.P.'s side were the students of Bihar, the middle and the lower classes, the small peasants and the landless labourers, chronic victims of man-made famines and shortages, slaves of local big-shots, millions of illiterate and poverty-stricken men, women, and children whose day is yet to dawn even after twenty-seven years of freedom from colonial bondage.

WHAT HAPPENED IN PATNA on 4 November is a sordid story. A city besieged by government forces fearing massive marches from all corners of Bihar, Patna was barricaded and defended against its own citizens by thousands of policemen and security forces brought in from outside the State which were ordered to thwart the peaceful demonstration of the people's will and resolve to remove a discredited government. All Bihar watched tensely. All India anxiously awaited the news from the battle-front.

People all over India waited for the mass media to flash reports from Patna. Many were anxious and apprehensive about J.P.'s personal safety. Would he be beaten up? Manhandled? Tear-gassed? Would they arrest him? There were rumours that he might be physically eliminated, although there was a widespread conviction that the Central Government would spare no pains for his personal security since any harm done to him would jeopardise Mrs Gandhi's own prestige. J.P. suffers from a heart condition, is a diabetic, and has a chronic kidney ailment. The stresses and strains of this major showdown could affect him adversely.

Telecommunications in India are a government monopoly and they did not answer these questions though the entire country anxiously awaited the news. The next day's newspapers brought the story and for a few days to follow details continued to emerge and show the government in a poor light. According to the staff correspondent of *The Statesman* (reporting from Patna on 3 November, barely ten hours before the proposed showdown), Abdul Ghafoor, the Chief Minister of Bihar, had declared that his government was prepared "to crush the lawless rebels who are out to destroy democratic institutions and ruin the State." The same correspondent also reported the arrest of over four thousand persons during the preceding 72 hours and the cancellation of all train, bus and steamer services to Patna. He reported further that "hundreds of capital-bound taxis, buses and trucks were stopped by the security people at various checkpoints." Thousands of copies of a printed leaflet issued by the District Magistrate of Patna were air-dropped in Patna and its adjoining districts. The leaflet was a warning to the potential demonstrators that those who defied the prohibitory orders (under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and the Defence of India Rules) would be punished with rigorous imprisonment for up to three years. The same day a group of 362 students was whisked away to an unknown destination by the authorities.

Another report estimated the police force inducted into the State to have been thirty thousand strong with over 300 magistrates deployed for duty. More than 3,000 leaders of the movement had already been put behind bars. It was clear that the government was determined to deny the peaceful demonstrators the right to express themselves, having characterised the demonstration itself as a threat to "democratic institutions." Chief Minister Ghafoor, who spoke with such determination, was himself securely lodged. In the words of a correspondent,

> "his bungalow at 3 King George's Avenue is cordoned off by several rows of barricades, leaving it quite impenetrable even for an infantry assault. There are similar fortifications around the Secretariat and the State Assembly. There are barricades even along the railway tracks. The Sri Krishna Memorial Hall at the far end of the maidan, Patna's premier auditorium, is now used as barracks for the Central Reserve Police."

Despite these war-like preparations, the government was unable to prevent the people from taking out a procession. Estimates of the size of the procession vary from between 15,000 and 40,000. The demonstrators were as peaceful as they were militant in spirit. However, the counter-action from the police was needlessly and deliberately coercive. In the words of the Bihar correspondent of *Everyman's*,

> "they [the demonstrators] broke cordon after cordon, barricade after barricade even as group after group went down under lathi blows or was dispersed and isolated by salvos of tear-gas shells, and a few hundred managed to break even the last cordon and reach the Serpentine Road residence of the State Finance Minister, Daroga Prasad Rai."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The demonstrations began at about 10 a.m. and continued up to 10 p.m. The photographer of *The Statesman*, Raghu Rai, was able to take a stunning photograph showing policemen armed with canes attacking J.P. himself. The photograph shows J.P. holding his spectacles in one hand being struck on the shoulder by a cane. Other policemen are seen trying to shield J.P.

This photograph assumes great documentary significance because the Union Home Minister, Brahmananda Reddy, had publicly denied that J.P. was physically attacked. Policemen who did not spare even J.P. acted much more ruthlessly against thousands of peaceful demonstrators. Another candid photograph by Raghu Rai shows a young demonstrator with a head injury, blood dripping over his face and soaking his clothes. From among the demonstrators not a single hand was raised, nor a single pebble thrown. The police, on the other hand, seriously injured several demonstrators, hitting them with batons fitted with brass knobs for extra effectiveness, breaking their heads, arms, and legs. They are also reported to have kicked the peaceful demonstrators with jackboots. The demonstrators were shelled with tear-gas. At one time, J.P.'s own jeep was completely enveloped by tear-gas.

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that all this was happening in independent India. The scenes reminded many of the British Raj. Instead of the Tommies, native Indian policemen and militia were charging peaceful demonstrations by their own countrymen. Instead of officials of an alien, imperialist régime, an Indian government was directing this brutal show.

It is clear who lost the battle and who won it. Both morally and physically the Government of India and of the State of Bihar were defeated in the battle of Patna. And yet, ironically, Abdul Ghafoor, the Chief Minister of Bihar, said: "I am happy that nothing serious happened today."

The seriousness of what happened in Patna on 4 November may have escaped Mr Ghafoor but millions of Indians throughout the country grasped its significance. A government elected by the people, which had been losing the people's confidence rapidly, had chosen to brow-beat, bully, and even deal physical blows to people demonstrating peacefully against it. The battle was for the survival of democracy: it was a battle for supremacy between the people and their legislators. It was also a battle raising the question whether India's infant democracy was turning into a dictatorship.

## *A Marxist in America*

WHO IS THIS MAN and from where has he emerged? The man who has vowed to liberate Bihar from the grip of misgovernment and corruption was born in a middle-class *Kayasth* farmer's family in 1902, in the village of Sitabdiara in the Saran district of Bihar. The *Kayasths* are one of the higher non-Brahmin castes whose members are more educated than others and who have contributed many administrators and civil servants throughout northern India. Jayaprakash's father was a minor Government official.

This village boy was 17 years old before he ever saw a tram-car. His rural upbringing was to give Jayaprakash both a lasting love of rural people and a haunting reminder of their poverty and the indignities they suffer.

By the beginning of 1921, J.P. was a student in the Patna Science College. He had already shown intellectual distinction and had won a scholarship but, in response to Mahatma Gandhi's call to boycott British educational institutions, he abandoned his studies just a few days before his examinations and threw himself into the non-cooperation movement, exactly as, half a century later in 1974, he asked the students of Bihar to abandon their studies for a year in order to serve the people. Even after the wave of non-cooperation had subsided, J.P. refused to join Banaras Hindu University because it was supported by government funds.

J.P.'s family did not have the financial resources to send him abroad for higher studies, but he had heard that in the USA—perhaps the only country in the world where this was possible—a poor boy could go to college and get a degree without having any financial means, by the simple expedient of working during vacations and in his spare time.

Encouraged by this thought, Jayaprakash arrived in California in October 1922, and he was to stay in that country for some seven years. As Jayaprakash recalls those days:

> "In America, I worked in mines, in factories and slaughterhouses. I worked as a shoeshine boy and even cleaned commodes in hotels. During vacations, I worked. Three or more boys lived in a single room and we cooked our own food. After graduation, I got a scholarship and three months later an assistantship in my department which made it possible for me to live in some comfort."

While he was thus roughing it through college, J.P. came under the influence of Marxist propaganda put out by American communists, led at that time by Jay Lovestone, and he became a communist for all practical purposes with one exception. That exception was, however, an

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

important one because it left J.P. a nationalist and a patriot. This was to be important, as we shall see, in his later life.

In 1929, Jayaprakash returned to India. For a little while, he served G.D.Birla as his Private Secretary; mercifully for the country, that association did not last long and J.P.'s attention turned to politics. "I was a communist when I returned to India", J.P. was to relate much later, "but I joined the Congress and not the Communist Party." Jayaprakash explained why. He mentioned that his patriotic instincts were fortified by the lesson he had learnt from Lenin that

> "in colonial countries Communists should in no circumstances isolate themselves from the struggle for independence, even if its leadership is in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the capitalists. But they forgot Lenin. They betrayed the freedom struggle. Mr Dange helped the CID. We were fighting for our freedom. Gandhiji was in jail. Nehru was in jail. And they were acting as traitors."

Soon Jawaharlal Nehru put him in charge of Labour Relations and, when the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932 started and the regular apparatus of the All India Congress Committee was to be smashed by the police, Jayaprakash was appointed General Secretary of the underground.

IT WAS IN THAT CAPACITY that I first met Jayaprakash when he came to see me in the High Court Library in Bombay when I too was functioning "underground." Referring to an association with the man who was later, as Home Minister in the Congress Government in Delhi, to cross swords with him in 1974, Jayaprakash was to observe: "Friendships made underground survive everything."

The next time I met Jayaprakash was in the "B" Yard of the Nasik Road Central Prison in January 1933 where he had preceded me, and there we started, with some others, the chapter of the conception and birth of the Congress Socialist Party. Though Jayaprakash was able to see the anti-national role played by the communists in India, in all other respects he unfortunately continued to see eye-to-eye with them. Hence the sad story of J.P.'s efforts to work out a "United Front" with the communists which was to end not only in the disruption of the Congress Socialist Party but also in giving the communists a stranglehold over socialist thought in India and a great deal of respectability which they have exploited ever since.[1]

## *In the Underground*

DURING THE Second World War, J.P.'s exploits fired the imagination of India's youth. Arrested soon after the beginning of the War, he found himself in Hazaribagh prison in his own State of Bihar, convicted to nine months' imprisonment. In 1941 he found himself detained, this time without trial, in the Deoli Detention camp in Rajasthan, along with several other socialists and communists.

At one point, they decided to go on an indefinite hunger-strike because of alleged ill-treatment by the authorities. J.P., being an honest man, actually fasted. So did many others. But, as the fast progressed, they discovered to their horror that the communists fasted during the day and ate at night after they were safely locked up! I remember the amusement with which I heard J.P. express his surprise and shock at this.

Early in 1942, J.P. was moved (or, as he put it in a letter from prison, "repatriated") to Hazari-

[1] Nothing if not generous, J.P., who had allowed me to part company with him in 1939 rather than part company with the communists, was to admit his mistake when he confessed in 1971 (in his booklet *Socialist Unity and the Congress Socialist Party*) that "experience has completely vindicated Masani's stand."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bagh jail in his home State. Once the *Quit India* campaign started in August, J.P. was restless and felt that he could not sit safely in prison during what he considered, like some others, the "Second War of Indian Independence." On 8 November, he and some of his friends made their escape from prison by tying one *dhoti* to the next and thus making a long rope which they threw over the prison wall to their accomplices outside.

For days J.P. and his group wandered aimlessly through the countryside eluding the police who were in hot pursuit. In search of sanctuary, they crossed over the border to Nepal where they thought they could relax. But the governments of India and Nepal got together to nab this group who by that time had acquired a few firearms for self-defence. At one point of time, J.P. and members of his group in Nepal were attacked by a police force and there was an exchange of shots. Finding Nepal not as hospitable as he had imagined, J.P. trekked back to Indian soil and managed to remain and function underground for some nine months.

On 17 September 1943, however, J.P. was arrested while travelling incognito to the Punjab. He was then taken into detention and held incommunicado in Lahore Fort. He was not beaten up, but he was not allowed to sleep. The attempt was to get him to confess that both the Mahatma and he were—pro-Japanese!

J.P. managed to survive the ordeal. Sensing what was going on, I had an agonising time wondering what was happening to him. I contacted Jeevanlal Kapur (then a lawyer, later a judge and now Chairman of the Delimitation Commission). We decided that the best thing would be to file a *habeas corpus* petition on his behalf. For this purpose my lawyer friend, H. R. Pardivala, went from Bombay to Lahore and he in turn was arrested for a few days but was released on a *habeas corpus* petition. Finally, J.P. was produced in court, which laid down the conditions for his further detention. Taking advantage of my position as Mayor of Bombay, I wrote (on 8 February 1944) to Prime Minister Khizr Hayat Khan of the Punjab requesting permission to correspond with J.P. and send him reading material. I received a prompt and courteous reply giving me permission to write and send books to J.P. (subject, of course, to censorship).

When I was elected as a Congress Member of the Indian Legislative Assembly in September 1945, J.P. was still detained in the Agra Central Prison along with Ram Manohar Lohia. My first speech in the Indian Legislative Assembly was a short one demanding J.P.'s and Lohia's release. In a letter from Agra Prison, J.P. said that he liked my speech, but he could not resist a critical comment. I had described J.P. as a great patriot and as a gentle person who would not hurt even a fly. J.P. sent me a veritable raspberry by asking: "Do you think it right to concede that only those who are too gentle to kill flies should be at liberty?"

## *Marx & Gandhi*

THE STORY OF J.P.'S relationship with Gandhi and of his conversion from Marxism to Sarvodaya is a tangled skein which is not easy to unravel. I had the advantage, however, of watching at close quarters various incidents that were illustrative of J.P.'s changing attitudes from time to time.

Thus, when J.P. and I called on Gandhiji at Wardha or elsewhere in the 1930s, I noticed that while I would shake hands in the normal manner or do a *namasté* standing erect, J.P. would invariably bend down and touch Gandhi's feet. I used to tease him about this and ask how a Marxist could behave in this manner. J.P.'s answer, which of course was quite reasonable, was that he had been brought up like a good Hindu to show respect to his elders and he saw no reason why he should not continue to do so. That did not however stop him from being generally very angry with Gandhiji and calling him a "reactionary."

UNDERNEATH THIS SOFT HEART, however, was an iron determination which at that time held J.P. like a vice to Marxism. Why J.P., whose patriotism was so intense and who was so broadminded in every respect, should cling so hard to the pro-communist line was a question that bothered some of us who loved him and yet found his obstinacy on the subject irritating. A part of the answer came to light at Sonepur, a small village which had the distinction of having the longest railway platform in India which was meant to accommodate thousands of peasants and cattle who came every year to attend a big peasant fair. We had planned a Summer School in order to educate our party workers, and J.P. and I were there to join in conducting socialist classes and leading discussions.

The thing that stands out in my mind about that Summer School is a little contretemps I had with J.P. I had just finished reading *Assignment in Utopia* by Eugene Lyons, an American communist of Russian origin who, after spending many years in the Soviet Union, had returned to the USA to tell the story of his disillusionment. I was so moved by this honest and passionate denunciation of Soviet tyranny and Stalin's betrayal that I gave the book to J.P. to read one evening.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The next morning at breakfast, J.P. handed the book to me. Since he could hardly have read the whole book overnight, I looked at him inquiringly. "I read a few chapters", he said. "I do not want to read any more." I asked whether this was because he thought it was an anti-Soviet book. "No", he said, "it seems to me to be honest." He went on to explain why, none the less, he would not read it. He said that he had once been a Hindu and had given up his religion in order to embrace Marxism. I was now trying to destroy his new faith. "Maybe all that Eugene Lyons writes about the USSR is true, but why should it happen here?" he argued, and added: "We can avoid all these horrors. In any event, I cannot afford to give up my orthodoxy. Otherwise I do not know where I would end up." And that was that.

I told J.P. that I was horrified at his refusal to face facts which seemed to me to be like that of the ostrich which was supposed to dig its head into the sand so as not to see approaching danger. We who were responsible for influencing the minds of the young in the country could hardly afford that luxury. I failed to shake J.P. on this point. For several years he would not look at anything that told him the grim truth about the failure of the October Revolution.

AT THAT STAGE OF HIS LIFE J.P. was, I fear, a very deeply confused man. A great deal had happened to shake his faith in communism both in Russia and in India. There is no doubt that Gandhiji's generous and friendly attitude towards him was also slowly making its impact. Still, he could not make up his mind to give up communism.

Gandhiji too seemed to be aware of the internal struggle that was going on. Some time in May 1939, J.P. and I were both in Delhi. Gandhiji was in town and I went to call on him to discuss the likely onset of World War II and the stand we should take in case it broke out. When the conversation turned to J.P., Gandhiji told me that while he accepted my own adherence to non-violence, he was not convinced about J.P.'s. He went on to lament the fact that a future leader of India like J.P. should be so uncertain about fundamentals like the attitude towards violence and non-violence. In an attempt at defending J.P., I told Gandhiji that J.P. believed in non-violence but that he was an angry young man with a short temper. "No, no", protested Gandhiji, "he does not have a short temper. He harbours anger in his heart."

When I got back to the place where J.P. and I were staying in Delhi, he happened to be shaving. I reported my conversation with the old man. When I reported Gandhiji's comment about him, J.P. stopped shaving for quite a while; when I asked him why, he replied that he was so terribly upset about Gandhiji's judgment that he would cut himself if he continued shaving. Once again, that combination of the Yogi and the Commissar!

Though J.P. was at last cured, thanks to the Indian communists' betrayal of the *Quit India* Movement and their treacherous "People's War" line and alliance with the British Government, he was still not ready to give up Marxism. The correspondence he carried on from prison, first from Lahore and then from Agra, shows the beginnings of a change. J.P.'s letters to me were clipped by the censors so thoroughly that what remained were mainly comments on the various books I sent him. These, however, were very revealing. Being rather naughty, I had deliberately sent him books such as Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, James Burnham's *The Machiavellians*, and Arthur Koestler's *The Yogi and the Commissar*, so that he could stop behaving like an ostrich. This time J.P. read these books for two reasons: first, he had already been disillusioned by the communists, and, second, the poor chap had no option! J.P.'s response to these books was now positive and appreciative. His comment on Koestler's book (in his letter to me of 19 August 1945 from Agra prison) was: "I think I am mainly a Commissar type with Yogic leanings." I wonder how he would modify that mixture now. Would he describe himself as a Yogi type with Commissar leanings?

I also sent J.P. an early copy of my book *Socialism Reconsidered*, which was packed with heresy from J.P.'s point of view. About this he wrote: "I do not know if you will be happy or begin to doubt your sanity but I nearly agreed with you hundred per cent! Well, the world does change, doesn't it?"

THE WORLD WAS CHANGING, but not yet completely. It seems J.P. was reproached by his orthodox socialist colleagues for having thus blessed my heresy and he clarified his remark by saying that what he meant was that he agreed a hundred per cent with my denunciation of Stalin's régime in Russia but not my acceptance of Gandhi. About that part of my book he claimed to have reservations:

> "People keep on inquiring if I have written anything. Well you tell them that I have—letters to Minoo Masani and others. Aren't they enough? By the way one of my letters to you has created a rather embarrassing situation. When I wrote from Lahore that I agreed nearly hundred per cent with your *Socialism Reconsidered* I was thinking largely of your treatment of Russia. I do not mean to suggest that I disagreed with the other parts, but my agreement with them was not nearly as complete. Will you please put me right in this matter with those whom it may concern?

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes I do remember the walks we had together in Nasik. Here too I have my evening walk, but alone as Rammanohar is unable to take any exercise. . . .

"Talking of Nasik, Minoo, let me say that the Nasik days were the happiest days I have yet spent in prison, and I cherish dearly the friendships I made there."

After coming out of prison, J.P. argued with me that it was better to be orthodox and to reinterpret Marx rather than renounce him as I had done. The former method had the advantage that it was possible to maintain contact with the true believers and gradually influence them in the right direction, while my method only made them angry and regard me as a renegade. I remember that, some time in 1945, we both addressed a public meeting in Bombay when he was the speaker and I was in the chair. He told me then in conversation that even though his faith in Marxism was shaken he felt that it was better not to renounce it and become a heretic like me but to try and convert his fellow Marxists. In these matters, as Louis Fischer put it, everyone has to have his own "Kronstadt." J.P.'s was to come eight years later.

J.P. used to keep in touch with Bapu and see him from time to time. One such meeting was on the eve of the All India Congress Committee in Delhi on 14 June 1947. This he did in a last unsuccessful effort to reactivate Gandhiji in resisting the attempt at partition.

A little later, on the eve of the transfer of power, Gandhi—who as is well known was not happy about the line taken by Nehru and Patel—sought to create a new balance in the Congress by thinking of J.P. as the new President of the Congress so that he might be a countervailing force and a check on Nehru and Patel who were to head the new government. Nehru did not respond when Gandhiji put the idea to him.[2]

It is a real tragedy that J.P.'s conversion to Gandhism was so slow that by the time he renounced Marxism and committed himself to Sarvodaya, Gandhiji had passed away. Otherwise, who knows but he might have achieved that kind of rapport with Gandhiji which could have changed India's destiny.

## *The Fast*

THE DEFINITE BREAK with Marxism was not to come until 1952. At that time, J.P. was the President of the Post & Telegraph Employees' Federation and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was the Minister in charge of the Communications portfolio. A strike called by the Federation was called off as a result of negotiations between J.P. and Kidwai. A certain understanding was reached between them about payment of wages during the period of strike, but this was not put on paper, and a little later Kidwai backed out. J.P. felt that he had let down his own men and that he had to do penance for his carelessness in not getting the agreement in writing. He decided on a twenty-one day fast at the Dinshah Mehta Clinic in Poona. Any other politician would have called this a hunger strike or a protest fast against the Minister, but not J.P. A statement he issued (on 22 June 1952) a day prior to embarking on his fast ran as follows:

"*To my Friends and Doctors:*

(*1*) This fast is not against anybody, nor for anything outside of myself.

(*2*) It may be recalled that the decision to fast had originated over a year ago from certain unsuccessful negotiations I had carried on with Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the then Communications Minister, regarding payment of strike period wages to postmen and lower grade staff.

(*3*) But today the fast has nothing to do (except for this historical connection) with those negotiations, nor with the Central Government, nor with Shri Kidwai.

(*4*) The fast is (a) in the nature of a self-correction, and (b) in fulfilment of a vow.

(*5*) During my negotiations with Shri Kidwai, I found I was guilty of carelessness and negligence. This was not in connection with a personal affair, but in the course of public work; and it affected a large number of men.

(*6*) The vow to fast was taken at that time to atone for the mistake. Today that particular mistake serves only an illustrative purpose, and I venture to hope that the fast will fit me better to discharge my duties in the future.

(*7*) The fact that I have not been able to carry out my vow till now has pained me. I cannot delay it any longer, and I hope I shall have the blessings even of those friends who have not approved of the fast.

(*8*) The fast will commence on the morning of June 23 and will last for three weeks, subject only to the limitation that I have no wish to die in its course.

(*9*) During the fast I shall take only water with Soda-bicarb and common salt.

(*10*) The fast being an entirely personal affair, I do not want any publicity, agitation or any sympathetic public manifestation in connection with it.

(*11*) The postmen, particularly, should not feel that they have any responsibility in the matter and should not indulge in any agitation on my account.

Some of us were a little worried whether J.P. would be able to see the fast through. He did not have Gandhiji's background of discipline and dieting to sustain him. I used to keep in close touch from Bombay with his wife Prabhavati in Poona. Some time midway through the fast, I

[2] Nehru in turn suggested Acharya Narendra Deva who was very close to him. Deva was in turn vetoed by Sardar Patel. Finally, Dr Rajendra Prasad was nominated President.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

went to Poona to see J.P. I asked Prabhavati what effect the fast was having on him as such fasts are supposed to promote the spiritual development of the person fasting and I was curious. Prabhavati told me that the fast was having a good effect on J.P. and his thinking but had not made quite the impact that Gandhiji's fasts had on him.

While I was chatting with J.P. at his bedside, I asked if he would write an article for *Freedom First* (the monthly journal of the Democratic Research Service with which I was associated). I told him that it was high time that he publicly renounced Marxism. To my delight, J.P. said he would let me have the article and asked how many days I would give him. Ten days was my reply, to make sure that he sent it while he was still in bed! I may in my own self-defence add that J.P. is a most reluctant article writer and correspondent. The article reached me within a week in Bombay. It appeared in the September 1952 issue of *Freedom First*, under the title: INCENTIVES TO GOODNESS. In a notable paragraph, J.P. at last jettisoned his Marxist intellectual baggage:

> "For many years, I have worshipped at the shrine of the goddess dialectical materialism—which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of the means to become truly human. In a material civilisation man has no rational incentive to be good. It may be that in the kingdom of dialectical materialism, fear makes men conform, and the Party takes the place of God. But when that God himself turns vicious, to be vicious becomes a universal code.
>
> "I feel convinced, therefore, that man must go beyond the material to find the incentives to goodness. As a corollary, I feel further that the task of social reconstruction cannot succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy."

Thus, at last, was the dead hand of Karl Marx discarded. I often wonder if J.P.'s acceptance of Sarvodaya is some kind of penance he is doing for having delayed his acceptance of Gandhiji's fundamentals. Could remorse be one of the reasons? When I asked J.P. later whether I was right in holding the view that it was during this fast that he finally jettisoned Marxism, J.P. replied: "I had three weeks to think it over, and, as you correctly say, I came to reject the philosophy based on Marxism and dialectical materialism because it did not offer the answer to the question: 'Why should man be good, or why should anyone be good?' . . . "

It is clear that the spiritual element in J.P. had won out in the end. Sarvodaya is in a way J.P.'s third religion. In March 1938 in Sonepur he could not see to what he could turn if he discarded Marxism. In Poona in 1952 he found the answer. It was in a way also a step back to Hinduism, though perhaps only a partial one, but from then on there was no looking back.

VERY SOON J.P. devoted himself entirely to Sarvodaya activities. The Sarvodaya movement is Gandhi's legacy and J.P., who has always been inalienably involved with the masses or rural India, was drawn into it. Gandhians who had remained outside politics but were carrying out Gandhi's programme for the social and economic emancipation of the Indian masses had found in Acharya Vinoba Bhave the kind of leader they needed after Gandhi's assassination in 1948. Vinoba had launched his "Bhoodan" movement in April 1951 and the Gandhian in J.P.—in search of a fair and equitable social order founded on everyman's voluntary commitment to truth and non-violence—found a cause to identify himself with.

J.P.'s wife, Prabhavati, had been a dedicated Gandhian social worker for most of her life and both Gandhi and Vinoba had great affection for her. Both J.P. and Prabhavati had been leading an ascetic life and J.P. became the first *jeevandani* —dedicating his life to Sarvodaya. It is interesting to note that while Nehru became Gandhi's political heir after 1947, J.P. was to emerge as Gandhi's moral and social successor. As late as the 1970s Ostergaard and Curell inform us in their study of the Sarvodaya movement, *The Gentle Anarchists*, that J.P. was the choice of as many as 86% of the *Sarvodayis* interviewed by them to be Vinoba's successor.

Unlike Gandhi and Vinoba, J.P. speaks in a modern Western idiom and translates the ideals of Sarvodaya into concepts familiar to most of the élite. As early as 1952, J.P. wrote an essay on "From Socialism to Sarvodaya" in which he observed:

> "I decided to withdraw from party and power politics not because of disgust or sense of any personal frustration, but because it became clear to me that politics could not deliver the goods, the goods being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood, peace. . . . The politics of Sarvodaya can have no party and no concern with power. Rather its aim will be to see that all centres of power are abolished. The more this new politics grows, the more the old politics shrinks. A real withering away of the State!"

J.P. has remained essentially faithful to this view more than twenty years later. His revolt today is against statism and the growing centralisation of power. He still believes in the ultimate replacement of *Raj-niti*, or state power politics, by *Lok-niti*, or people's politics.

There is a vast gap between Vinoba's traditional Hindu idiom and J.P.'s sophisticated Westernised idiom with its strong resemblance to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

classical anarchism and yet invested with good practical sense. To J.P. corruption is the consequence of the centralisation of power which also threatens man's fundamental freedoms.

There is as much contrast between Gandhi and Vinoba as there is between Vinoba and J.P. As a third generation Gandhian, J.P. brings back to the Gandhian movement the all-pervasive social and moral sensitiveness that was Gandhi's own hallmark. While Vinoba was Gandhi's spiritual successor, by temperament he is more in the Hindu tradition of saints and gurus than Gandhi himself was. This might explain why J.P.'s Bihar movement was later to precipitate a confrontation between Vinoba and himself and a crisis of identity for the Sarvodaya movement itself.

## *In the "Bhoodan" Movement*

IT WAS IN 1954 that J.P. joined the "Bhoodan" movement conducted by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. He built his own ashram at Sekhodeora in Gaya district of Bihar. Then started for many years his wanderings through the countryside of India moving from village to village asking for *bhoodan*, the gift of land, as a part of the campaign in pursuit of Gandhiji's Theory of "Trusteeship."

J.P. asked me to spend a few days with him in Bihar, the idea being that I should walk with him on his tour in the course of which he was collecting land for the landless, and I thus had a glimpse of the kind of life J.P. was to lead for many a year.

In March 1954, I found myself in a jeep speeding northward from the city of Gaya. I caught up with J.P. in the little village of Kalpa, some five or six miles from the town of Jehanabad. The jeep came to a stop outside the village library and on the verandah sat J.P. holding counsel with the villagers. Soon he moved to an open space where there was a little platform with a radio set through which he could address the crowd that had collected. J.P. responded to the welcome that had been extended to him. He stressed that what he was after was not *manpatras* (addresses) but *danpatras* (deeds of gift).

I listened to several speeches made by Jayaprakash at other villages on our route; each differed a little from the one that had gone before. There were local questions and local problems to deal with, but the gist of the message remained more or less the same. Here, as I recall, is the essence of Jayaprakash's appeal to the villagers of Jehanabad subdivision.

"We live", Jayaprakash started by saying, "in an age of moral corruption. Why is this so? This is so because God made man to be happy but man has departed from the path of *dharma*, which is to be happy in another's joy and sad in another's sorrow." Jayaprakash then compared the behaviour of human beings with that of dogs scrapping for a bone, each for himself. He would refer to the recent *kumbh mela* at Allahabad to which some people from Gaya district had gone: "Some people go to the Ganges to wash off their sins and get purified. But the Ganges is right here and *shuddi* (purification) can be had at home also. If you wish to be purified, you do not have to go all the way to Allahabad."

Having thus started by making a moral appeal to his listeners, Jayaprakash came down to earth and stressed the fact that this was an era of change: "You see profound changes taking place around you in the world. The British Raj which you had for many years has gone, so have the Maharajas. The *zamindar* who was with you till the other day has also gone now." Then he asked:

> "Do you think the world will now remain as it is for eternity? Is there any reason why it should now stop changing? I can assure you it is not so. That is not the nature of the universe in which there is constant change. For one thing, the landless will not let it rest as it is. Some people have too much land, while others have none. Land must and will be more justly redistributed. Further changes must come, one way or the other."

Then Jayaprakash turned to other countries of the world, particularly to Russia and China, and pointed out how certain changes which had become overdue had come about there. "In Russia", he said, "they came with violence, brutality and murder. They have done no one any good." He pointed out that in Telengana a similar effort resulted in at least three thousand people being killed and millions of rupees worth of property being destroyed. "The bigger revolution is to bring about change peacefully and through love", he urged. "Let those with a lot of land give away the surplus, let the middle peasants give away a sixth of their land, and let even the poor give just a tiny bit as a token of their participation."

Answering those who asked why they should not wait for a law to be passed for the redistribution of land, Jayaprakash said:

> "Certainly let laws be passed to redistribute the land fairly. But what merit is there for the man who waits to be dispossessed by virtue of law? What merit is there for the *zamindar* who had been expropriated by the law? Does anyone remember his name or sing his praises? Do you need a law to be passed before you desist from theft? Of course not. Self-redemption cannot come from above or without. There is little difference between the sword and the law. Both are coercive."

Jayaprakash then traced the history of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'Bhoodan Yagna" and described how it started. It was when the region of Telengana in the state of Hyderabad had been ravaged by the violence of the communists and the counter-violence of the military and police who had been sent to supress them and to restore order that the idea of "Bhoodan Yagna" was born. At the village of Pochampalli some Harijans asked Vinobaji, who was preaching non-violence and trying to heal the wounds of the people: "So long as some of us are hungry, how can there be peace in the village?" Vinobaji asked the man: "How much land do you need?" "Eighty acres would suffice for our group of Harijan families", the man replied. Vinobaji turned to the landlords present for an answer. Suddenly, one of them got up and offered a sixth of his land—a hundred acres. That was twenty acres more than was needed. Joyful at heart, Vinobaji turned to the Harijans and said: "Here is your answer", and he thought to himself: "If this can happen in Pochampalli, why not in the rest of Telengana?" Within a few weeks, Vinobaji had collected a great deal of land in the region of Telengana.

DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS we moved on from village to village. At one village meeting, just as Jayaprakash was going to start speaking, a leaflet was placed in his hands: "BEWARE OF THE NET OF ILLUSION OF BHOODAN YAGNA." The rest of the leaflet went on to malign Vinoba and Jayaprakash as enemies of the peasants who were seeking to divert their attention from the class struggle.

A set of questions addressed to Jayaprakash by an anonymous questioner also reached the platform. It was obvious that a few communists had got to the village ahead of Jayaprakash in order to frustrate his work. One of the questions was: "What do you think of what has been achieved in Russia and China?"

J.P. started by saying that he had no use whatsoever for the kind of society that had come into existence in Russia and China. He disliked it a hundred per cent. What had the people in Russia got? Certainly not what Lenin had wanted. Not the peasants and workers but those who controlled the Red Army and the Secret Police were enjoying the fruits of the revolution. Stalin's had been a reign of terror. Such people still ruled Russia after his death. In a dictatorship there can be no rule of the people, as there was in India under its democratic Constitution.

He then patiently explained to the peasants, perhaps for the first time in their lives, what had been happening in Russia, and how on Stalin's death Malenkov, Beria and Molotov had jointly seized power. He then spoke about their quarrels and about Beria's liquidation, and asked:

> "Who decided for Malenkov or against Beria? It was not the people but the Red Army tanks which were stronger than the Secret Police. The man with the biggest gun won. Soviet Raj was like the Raj of Ravan, the villain of the Ramayana. That is why they did not wish to imitate it. Even wealth was not distributed. One man got a hundred times as much as another. Inequalities had increased. A new caste system had sprung up, and new exploiters ruled in place of the old."

And then he said:

> "You may say it cannot happen here in India, but that is not true. Do not think the Himalayas will protect us. The fire is at our door. It has already destroyed life and property in Telengana. Communist violence was suppressed there by counter-violence. It was, however, killed only when Vinobaji arrived there. If Communism comes to India, it will come over Vinobaji's corpse and my own. But we shall not be able to stop it unless you all cooperate with us now."

## *Man of Conscience*

IN THE YEARS TO FOLLOW, whenever a major issue arose which involved the honour of India, J.P. became India's conscience-keeper. Thus, in 1956, it was he who raised his powerful voice in defence of the freedom of the people of Hungary against the Soviet tanks at a time when Prime Minister Nehru was unable for days on end to see who was attacking whom!

Again, in 1960, he came forward as the champion of the peace-loving people of Tibet and their leader, the Dalai Lama, whose country had been overrun by the Chinese Communist forces while the Government of India stood by and watched in supine silence, prating about Chinese "sovereignty" over that hapless land.

In the mid-1960s, J.P., as always the country's conscience-keeper, felt the need to intervene in Nagaland where the Indian security force had for years been engaged in an inconclusive shooting encounter with the Naga Army and "the Federal Republic of Nagaland." J.P. decided that his love of freedom and his regard for the good name of India demanded that he should study the situation and try to bring about a cease-fire which might lead, in course of time, to a settlement between the Indian Government and the Nagaland Government. He very wisely refused to take sides between secession on the one hand and a large measure of autonomy within the Indian Union on the other. In September 1954, a ceasefire was signed between the Indian authorities on the one side and the Nagaland Federal Government on the other. For this act of statesmanship, a great deal of credit must go not only to J.P. but also to the then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who in his own way acted as a gentle brake on Indian chauvinism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THE MID-50s, J.P. was found to have contracted diabetes. While he could be persuaded to take insulin during a crisis, he objected that daily injections of foreign matter in the system were unnatural and therefore un-Gandhian. My argument that insulin was simply a replacement for the juices normally secreted by the pancreas and not a drug went unheeded. I wrote to Acharya Vinoba Bhave, pleading for his support in persuading J.P. to take insulin and not risk his life. Far from getting any encouragement, all I got from Vinoba Bhave was a snub saying that he entirely agreed with J.P.! I was naturally disappointed. Perhaps faith in God made these good men support a proposition which I thought was suicidal.

Suddenly, some time in May 1956, someone told me that a German doctor in Bombay by the name of Dr Amson was experimenting with something that could be taken by mouth in place of the daily injection of insulin to which J.P. objected. I went and saw Dr Amson. Dr Amson, who evidently held J.P. in high esteem, said he would be delighted to cooperate, but must examine J.P. to make sure that his particular kind of diabetes would be amenable to the German tablets which Dr Amson was trying out in India.

I wrote to J.P. telling him about my talk with Dr Amson and forwarding an article by an American published in the journal of the Indian medical profession. J.P. wrote back to me saying: "You have sent me the best news of the century." He also agreed to come down to be examined. So, after all, I corrected myself, the man really wants to live!

Fortunately, Dr Amson found that the tablets would work on J.P. and, since they were not yet available in India, he very generously kept J.P. in supplies for several years as a little *dan* (gift) from himself.

J.P. SAW IN NAXALBARI, in Bengal—from which the Naxalites got their name—as Acharya Vinoba Bhave saw in Telengana in 1948, symptoms of a disease, a challenge and a focal point for action. J.P.'s basic attitude to the Naxalites was that, while he disagreed with the terrorism and violence preached and practised by the Indian Maoists, he was at the same time conscious of the fact that India could not have social peace without solving the problem of land and doing justice to the share-croppers. He decided to press for his alternative to Naxalism.

In the middle of 1970, J.P. settled down in the Musahari block of Muzzafarpur district in Bihar and started a campaign to persuade the Naxalites and the people there to accept the peaceful way to revolution. Musahari is one of the forty Community Development Blocks in Muzzafarpur; it has a total area of 43,983 acres, of which 36,398 acres are cultivated; its estimated present population (rural) is 118,737.

This decision of J.P.'s to go there was prompted by a report that the Naxalites had held out a threat to assassinate two prominent Sarvodaya leaders—Babri Babu, President of the Sarvodaya Mandal, and Gopal Misra, Secretary of the Gram Swaraj Samiti. J.P. told the press that, since the *sarvodayis* bear no arms and work in the open, any secret and violent group could kill them and it would be the easiest thing to do, requiring no bravery or skill. Outlining the Sarvodaya ideal, he said: "We specially stress the importance of people's power at the community and work place levels, that is, in the factory, offices or institutions." He continued:

> "Sarvodaya endeavours to realise its ideals through people's direct action. In this respect it is more akin to a violent revolution. A violent revolution is never accomplished by legislation. It is also brought about by people's direct action. The difference is that in the case of a violent revolution, the old social order is destroyed only when, after a long period of struggle and preparation, the revolution is victorious; and the construction of the new social order begins only thereafter, and proceeds slowly from stage to stage. In the case of a non-violent revolution, on the other hand, both the processes of transformation of the old social order and reconstruction of the new go together side by side."

In two articles in *The Hindustan Times*, J.P. referred to the way in which the press had dramatised his work in Musahari by saying that he had accepted the "challenge" of the Naxalites and decided to "fight them."

> "I, no doubt, have my human share of vanity, but I am not a particularly vain person. Even during my political days, when I was younger, it was not my wont to throw challenges about or 'declare war' on political opponents. I have no army, not even a non-violent army, to fight the Naxalites with, nor do I look upon what I am doing as a fight *against* anybody but as a fight for social and economic justice. The truth, quite contrary to what has been made out, is that I have undertaken my present task prayerfully and in a spirit of deep humility."

In May 1970 an attack was made on the Gandhi Peace Foundation Centre in Jamshedpur by the Naxalites. A bomb was burst and Gandhiji's picture was stoned and broken. When the news of this reached Jayaprakash he wrote:

> "If the partisans of violence look upon Gandhiji as an enemy, should that surprise us? We should rather feel happy that the advocates of bloody revolution should find such power in Gandhiji's ideas and fear them so much that they should want to erase his very memory. But these are very foolish people. Truth can never be destroyed. Indeed, the more it is attempted to destroy it, the brighter and purer it shines forth.
>
> "There is yet another cause for our rejoicing. We Gandhians were slowly becoming dull and spiritless

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and bogged down in our petty quarrels. The reason was that we had no opposition to face, no risk to take. But now, when we will have to do our work at the risk of our lives, we shall be purified, water and milk shall be separated and our mettle will shine brightly." (Translated from Hindi)

"If the press insists", continued J.P., "on describing this as 'fighting' the Naxalites, it may. But that is not how I myself look upon my work. Mine is not a negative but a positive task."

J.P.'s programme, as he outlined it, was in two parts. One part related to the implementation of the Gramdan pledges obtained in the Block and involved the redistribution of one-twentieth of the land covered by Gramdan. The other part was to distribute undistributed Bhoodan lands, to ensure that every "privileged person" had received his homestead *parchas*, to look into the problems of landless labourers, and to take up specific cases of injustice and oppression.

His work in Musahari provided J.P. with an opportunity to ruminate about the Indian countryside and his attitude to it.

"Even though this is not the first time that I have taken up intensive village work, I had not buried myself in this manner before in a limited rural area for such highly intensive work for an indefinite period. This has naturally given me a unique opportunity to look closely at the reality of village life in these parts. Being a villager myself, I love village life and would any day prefer to live in my own village than, say, Patna or Delhi. But in spite of this partiality I must confess that the socio-economic reality in the village, on close examination, is ugly and distressing in the extreme. My first reaction on coming face to face with reality was to realise how remote and unreal were the brave pronouncements of Delhi or Patna from the actuality at the ground level! High-sounding words, grandiose plans, reforms galore. But somehow they all, or most of them, manage to remain suspended somewhere up in mid air. They hardly touch the ground—at least not here. Or touch it very lightly. In the event, what meets the eye is utter poverty, misery, inequality, exploitation, backwardness, stagnation, frustration and loss of hope."

Dealing with the violence prevalent, he observed:

"A part of this violence is no doubt artificially created in pursuance of a political ideology, but it would never have taken any root had not the ground been prepared for it by the persistence of poverty, unemployment and a myriad social-economic injustices. If my remark about the implementation of existing reform laws producing a mini social revolution in the countryside is true, its converse is equally true. The failure to implement those laws for such a protracted period of time has inevitably led to the growth of the rural violence that we witness today. It is not the so-called Naxalites who have fathered this violence but those who have persistently defied and defeated the law for the past so many years—be they politicians, administrators, landowners or moneylenders.

"The central issue in all revolutions is that of power, and though they are all made in the name of people's power, power comes invariably to be usurped by a handful of the most ruthless among the erstwhile revolutionaries. Nor can it be otherwise when power comes out of the barrel of the gun and the gun is not in the hands of the common people but in those of the organised instruments of violence that a successful revolution always throws up—the 'revolutionary' army and its auxiliaries.

"If democracy is found wanting and violence offers no solution, what then is the way out? To find the way we will have to go back to Gandhiji. His plan was to create, along with the power of the state, the power of the people."

J.P. WAS DEEPLY DISTRESSED in May 1971 at the wanton killing of people in Bangladesh, then a part of Pakistan, and the flood of refugees that was flowing into India. He decided to undertake a world tour to awaken the international conscience against the massacres in Bangladesh. J.P. and his friends knew that, being a non-official, he would not be able to get any commitments from any of the government leaders whom he hoped to meet. No tangible results were expected, but it was hoped that he would be able to focus the attention of the world on the atrocities that were being committed by the military dictatorship of Pakistan against a large segment of the human race. This was achieved in the countries and many world capitals which J.P. visited.

In Rome, Pope Paul expressed his deep concern and sympathy at what was happening in Bangladesh. The Pope said that with regard to help being given to the people of Bangladesh the Pakistan Army was "interfering" with relief work, and it was not possible to do any work until this interference was stopped. J.P. wrote:

"At that point, I requested that the Holy Father should issue an appeal to arouse the conscience of the world in respect of the suffering and misery of the people of Bangladesh. He nodded his head but said nothing. Then he took both my hands in his and blessed me—that ended the interview."

A few days later, Pope Paul did issue a universal appeal to come to the aid of the refugees from Bangladesh as well as the people of Bangladesh.

THERE WAS AN INTERESTING DIVERSION from his main work when J.P. got involved in the liberation and emancipation of the dacoits of Chambalghat district in Madhya Pradesh. The dacoits of the Chambal valley had an India-wide reputation. It all started with the leader of the Chambalgati dacoits, Madhao Singh, visiting J.P. incognito and asking for his blessings and guidance. J.P. was naturally reluctant. "It was after a great deal of persuasion on his part", he wrote later (in *Everyman's* in 1973), "that I reluctantly agreed to involve myself in this business of surrender." Thus started long and intricate negotiations which involved Jayaprakash meeting not only the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, but

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also the Prime Minister. The end product, however, was a great success. By May 1972, when 78 dacoits laid down their arms at the feet of Jayaprakash and the Chief Minister at Gwalior, the total number of outlaws, or *baghi bhais* as J.P. had addressed them, who had surrendered to the Sarvodaya leader's "change of heart" mission numbered 267.

Like Father Flanagan of *Boy's Town* in the USA who held that "no boy was a bad boy", it was Jayaprakash's proposition that "no one is a criminal by birth but due to circumstances some become so." In a long article on "Crime and Punishment" which he wrote in *Everyman's* (15 December 1973), J.P. expounded this philosophy:

> "Yesterday I came by a copy of *Sarvodaya*. In it there was a quotation from Gandhiji. And I found that he had put very succinctly the point that I have been trying to make. He said that all jails should be hospitals. Crime is a disease and the criminal is a diseased person. This disease is not hereditary; it is not transmitted from father to son; a criminal is not born a criminal. He acquires the disease from society."

From this, Jayaprakash moved on to a broader philosophical issue, namely, the issue of the interlocking of means and ends. Jayaprakash referred to the communist thesis about the State withering away and pointed out why—because there was a wide gap between their ends and their means and the two were mutually contradictory—they had lost.

> "The Russian Revolution took place in November 1917. It is now fifty-six years since the revolution. How far has Russia advanced towards a stateless society during these fifty-six years? Even today there is no freedom there. There is far greater freedom of press and platform even in our country. In Russia, their greatest scientist, Sakharov, their greatest writer, Solzhenitsyn, are even today subjected to persecution and, for all you know, may soon be put behind bars. The two are international celebrities. One has already won the Nobel Prize. All the eighty-five living Nobel Laureates all over the world have appealed to the Russian Government to spare them. Sakharov is one of the topmost scientists of the world. He is the father of the Russian atom bomb. Whether it is Russian nuclear power or space exploration or moon landing—all of it derives from the researches and work of Sakharov. Such a man is hunted in Russia fifty-six years after the glorious revolution."

Gandhiji's means, on the other hand, were in harmony with the ends. For him, means and ends were indistinguishable which is why he said that "means are ends." "I am a humble social worker", wrote Jayaprakash. "I have learned something from social sciences and something from Gandhi and Vinoba and have formed a general idea how to reform and change society. But so far as reforming and changing man is concerned, I cannot go further with others than I have gone with myself in changing myself."

In June 1972, I interviewed J.P. about his work with the dacoits for the *Illustrated Weekly of India*. In the course of his replies to my queries, J.P. made some rather interesting comparisons between the dacoits he had emancipated and the Indian businessman and the politician. When I asked him somewhat facetiously who he found the more intractable—the dacoits or the businessmen in whom we had jointly tried to arouse a sense of social responsibility—J.P. replied: "I think it is the businessmen who are the more intractable. That is how we have this creeping disease called Statism in India today."

That his disillusionment with politicians was just as deep became clear when I made a reference to the suggestion made by a journalist that Madhao Singh, the leader of the dacoits, should stand for Parliament, and I asked J.P. somewhat mischievously whether, in that event, Madhao Singh would not be in good company. J.P. demurred gravely and said dryly: "He would probably not be in good company, Minoo, because *he* would be a reformed dacoit."

## *The Presidency?*

IT HAS BEEN THE FASHION on the eve of each election for the Presidency of the Republic for someone to fly the kite that J.P. should be nominated for election as President of India. This had already happened on two occasions and, on each occasion, J.P. had to make it quite clear that he was not in the running. Once again, in the beginning of 1974, the usual speculation started and there were press reports of various suggestions that J.P. should be drafted for the Presidential election which was shortly due. On 14 February, J.P. thought it was necessary to announce at a public meeting he was addressing that he was not in the running for the Presidentship. "If J.P. wanted to be President or Prime Minister", he quipped, "he could have become some years ago. I have learnt my lessons from Gandhi and Lenin."

J.P.'s ADOPTION of the Sarvodaya philosophy in the mid-fifties had led to an identity of views between J.P. and his wife Prabhavati who had been one of Gandhiji's devotees and had attended to Gandhiji for many years as an inmate of his ashram. Now at last J.P. had come to worship at the same shrine and Prabhavati was happy. Though still her unassuming self, she began to take more interest in J.P.'s public activities. Her long association with Gandhiji had made her both an efficient secretary and a trained personal attendant. It was she who protected J.P. from undue harassment, looked after his diet and his

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rest, as much as he would permit, saw to it that he remembered and kept his engagements, and generally kept some order in his tumultuous life.

In a misguided attempt to save J.P. from additional worry when his own health was frail, she had hidden from him and everyone else certain signs of trouble within her own system. When at last this came to light and was diagnosed, the dreaded judgment of cancer was passed. Despite treatment and an operation at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Bombay, Prabhavati passed away on 15 April 1973. Never before had J.P. been or looked as forlorn. Her letters to him he had not kept, but he told me that he cried unabashedly when he read his own letters to her through the years which she had meticulously filed and retained.

J.P.'s own health had been none too satisfactory. In 1971 he had suffered his first mild heart attack but he soon recovered. It was then announced that he would retire completely from all political activities and public life for a year from October 1972 when he would reach the age of 70. I wrote to him suggesting that it would be much more sensible that he should start his year of retirement immediately in view of his health and get back to activity in October 1972. J.P., however, went ahead with his original plans.

On 9 October 1972, J.P. left Patna for his own home town of Sitabdiara for his year's vacation from public life. In November, he developed a carbuncle and had to be shifted to hospital at Banaras Hindu University for treatment. It was there that Prabhavati's own ailment was diagnosed and the roles of patient and nurse were reversed. For the next few months, it was J.P. who nursed Prabhavati till the end came.

## *A New Revolutionary Situation?*

SOME SIX YEARS AGO I was asked to deliver the fourth Rajaji Birthday Lecture. I was then General Secretary of the Swatantra Party and a Member of Parliament. I chose as my subject the theme: *Too Much Politics, Too Little Citizenship.*

In my talk I raised some rather basic issues. One of these was that, as a result of the intrusion of the State in, and the politicisation of, every walk of life, popular initiative had shrivelled and the common people were apt to talk about "*we*" and "*they*" and to blame everything on "*them.*" I pointed out that this thinking was all wrong. If "they" were guilty, then each of us was also guilty, since the daily exercise of vigilance was the price of liberty. Pointing out that what we lacked in India was what the Americans call "grass-roots" democracy, voluntary action at the level of the farm, the village and the town, I suggested we should call it "rice-roots" activity in our own country. Hundreds of voluntary organisations are required to work for causes, to fight evils, to expose them. Each one of us has the obligation to participate in one or the other of them. Passivity is the enemy of freedom. I reminded my audience of the old saying that "all that is necessary for bad men to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

This warning about the absence of an infrastructure in our democratic life, with the Government and the parties floating on top with nothing below to anchor or root them in the minds and lives of the people, particularly in the countryside, went unnoticed for all practical purposes.

By 1974 it was clear that the erosion in our democracy to which I had drawn attention had advanced very much further. Not only had the style of the Government changed from a meddling inefficiently democratic one to one with authoritarian overtones, but the Government had misused its parliamentary position, based on the archaic British electoral system of "first past the post", to undermine the Fundamental Rights of the citizen and the independence of the judiciary. It appeared to me that we were well on the way to a Marxist take-over.

By that time, I was neither a Member of Parliament nor actively involved in the functioning of any political party. When asked whether I thought that if the Swatantra Party took power it could do a better job, I answered in the negative and said:

> "I think perhaps we have got past the stage when a political party could do what you want. In that sense, Mrs Gandhi is a kind of de Gaulle who came to power on the ruins of the Fourth Republic and you cannot now go back to the Fourth Republic. I have described her as the de Gaulle that failed. I would be inclined to think that we are now entering a revolutionary situation. I fear, though I am a very strong democrat, that for a while extra-constitutional forces may take over. We are beginning to see them already. Look at Gujarat. I deplore the methods used. It is terrible to overthrow governments this way. The democratic safety valves have been destroyed by Mrs Gandhi and her methods."

It is against this background that the emergence of Jayaprakash on the national scene, playing the kind of active role that he has been doing since the beginning of 1974, can be evaluated.

What a change came over the scene! In place of despondency, there was now hope. In place of cowardice, there was courage, at least in some quarters. There was a feeling that people can save themselves, that things can change, and not necessarily for the worse, and that there is no need to look for liberation to extraneous quarters like the Armed Forces. The "*we*" and "*they*" are

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still there, but there is a feeling that "*we*" can replace or displace "*them.*" There is no doubt that the credit for this must go to some extent to the students and youth of Gujarat and, of course, for the rest, to Jayaprakash Narayan.

When, therefore, J.P. asked me to join the National Executive Council of the Citizens for Democracy on 12 June 1974, I gladly responded to the invitation.

I RESPONDED TO J.P.'s plea for "total revolution" and his belief that hope for India lay neither through elections nor Parliament. As I saw it, Jayaprakash was rejuvenating India's political life and in his own way was infusing vitality into the democratic system. He has already shaken the *status quo* that has lasted over the last two decades. I felt that J.P.'s campaign was essentially Gandhian in that it was an open revolution, the aims of which were openly stated and publicised for all to know. In a way it was the first genuine mass movement that India had witnessed since Independence and I felt that perhaps Jayaprakash could do what Rajaji and we had failed to accomplish. It was clear to me that nobody else could do what he is endeavouring to do because there is nobody else today who enjoys the charisma, credibility and leadership that have made masses of people throughout the country rally round him. Not for nothing is he regarded widely as "democracy's best and last hope."

Many strands have emerged into the making of the man. His entire record of three score and ten years is made up of four outstanding urges: love of individual liberty, love of the country, a passion for social justice, and deep religious and spiritual values. These four strands run throughout his entire public life extending over four-and-a-half decades, at times running parallel, at other times intertwining and at yet others crossing one another.

Decades of withdrawal from active power politics and of moving around the countryside, studying developments in Naxalbari and Musahari, collecting surplus land and distributing it to the landless, all these have prepared Jayaprakash for the vital role that he has now to play.

This does not mean that there is no room for the considerable amount of doubt, discussion and speculation that has been caused by Jayaprakash's present activities. There are unquestionably areas of ambiguity. Only the most cocksure would claim that the outlook is clear and leaves no room for uncertainty and consequent concern. There are no guarantees possible in regard to a successful outcome.

A LARGE SECTION OF PEOPLE are apprehensive that the outlook is precarious because of J.P.'s age and the state of his health. They fear that if he were to be removed from the scene, the entire effort would collapse and we would be back to square one.

In a telling speech to a mass gathering on 5 June 1974, Jayaprakash gave his own answer to this question:

> "Nobody, Jayaprakash Narayan or anyone else, can stop this movement. It has been born because the system of education is rotten and the students don't see a ray of hope. It was born because the people are being crushed under high prices. There is corruption and bribery everywhere. Unemployment goes on rising both of the educated and others. Otherwise a thousand Jayaprakash Narayans and a thousand Chhatra Sangharsh Samitis could not have created a mass movement like this. There is fire in the hearts of the people. Countless children in Bihar go to sleep without food. I see numerous people getting emaciated. There is a barber in my own village. I was appalled to see how thin he has grown. When I asked Ramusudha Thakur why he was so reduced, he replied that there was nothing for him to eat. I don't know how people manage to live. What do they eat? After the death of my wife I have had to keep an account of my expenses and I am amazed at the amount I have to spend on food alone. Without the interest from the Magasaysay Award and the help of some generous friends, I too would have possibly had to starve. . . ."

Having watched Jayaprakash for months, I for one saw no great reason to share the apprehensions about his health. At the same time, one may recall that Konrad Adenauer was seventy-three when he became West Germany's first post-war Chancellor and he remained in that onerous position and managed the affairs of his country for no less than fourteen years. De Gaulle retired when he was seventy-nine. Both Mao and Tito are over eighty.

THE FACT THAT THIS UPSURGE has taken place in Bihar is not by any means an accident. Harsh as it may sound, not only is Bihar one of the most backward States in the Indian Union but what makes this even more poignant is the fact that Bihar is endowed with richer natural resources than any other part of India. Many years ago when I wrote my little book, *Our India*, I had complained that Nature had not distributed her favours evenly and ended up by saying: "These Biharis do seem to have all the luck, don't they?"

Man, however, in the form of those who rule in Patna and Delhi, has thwarted the kindly designs of Nature, with the result that today Bihar presented a picture of tragic desolation, with a devastating combination of floods, drought smallpox and strikes by sections of Government employees as a result of which some 30,000 people died and production worth Rs. 500 crores

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was lost. It was no wonder then that the State was bankrupt. Jayaprakash himself has talked about this:

> "Look, friends, for one thousand years the history of India was the history of Bihar. From the age of the Mauryas to the last Gupta, Bihar was synonymous with India. For one thousand years this very city—Pataliputra—was one of the largest cities in the world, and a vital centre of culture and knowledge. And look at Patna today! Bihar has such fertile land, land which can yield a harvest of gold. Bihar has such perennial rivers—here flows the Ganga, the Kosi and the Gandak. And yet, here is where we starve. Why? Is it the fault of the people that they starve? Is it the fault of the leadership, all those who have been in power? Bihar has the richest mineral resources of all Indian States. And yet Bihar is the poorest state, the most backward. Aren't these people ashamed to sit in their chairs of authority? What have they done to develop industry? What have they done to develop anything at all except cultivating their own interests? Oh yes, some have built their own bungalows and have bought land. But what have they done for the people? . . . Let our life be so transformed that Bihar would once again attain the glory it had attained during the reign of Emperor Ashoka."

## *Strategy and Tactics*

EVER SINCE JAYAPRAKASH launched his campaign, he faced the dilemma of whether to confine his agitation to Bihar or to help spread it throughout the country, and it is perhaps not unnatural that he should have oscillated between these two alternatives. By the middle of the year, and particularly after his return from Vellore, invitations to visit other parts of the country had begun to pour in and, while resisting most of them, Jayaprakash started responding to the plea of friends and sympathisers outside Bihar.

There is a great deal to be said both in support of these visits to other places and against them. Obviously, the tremendous crowds and mammoth meetings that have listened to Jayaprakash must have acted as a morale booster not only to him but to his supporters in Bihar. Jayaprakash has also adduced a philsophical argument in favour of this by saying that he never supported Stalin's slogan of "socialism in one country." Presumably therefore, he is even less in favour of the liberation of Bihar only, while the rest of the country continues to be a victim of misgovernment and corruption. Obviously there could be no liberated Bihar without a liberated India.

Nobody has suggested that the success of the campaign in Bihar should be an end in itself or the end of the road. Those who have argued that the campaign should be mainly limited to Bihar have done so because they have felt that organisationally this was the right strategy and would in fact give the best and quickest results. In a way, it is a question of utilising and mobilising one's manpower and scarce resources. There is such a thing as spreading the butter so thin that one can no longer taste it. Having been with Jayaprakash in Varanasi on Christmas Day and for a day on 20 January in Ahmedabad where I had gone to inaugurate the Conference of the Citizens for Democracy, as also in Bombay later, it would appear as if, on balance, the advantage lay in Jayaprakash concentrating on making his total revolution in Bihar a success rather than on straining his physical resources in travelling from one end of the country to the other.

Perhaps Jayaprakash himself had come to a similar conclusion judging by the fact that at his final public meeting on Republic Day at Shivaji Park in Bombay, which was generally described by the press as the biggest meeting there in living memory, he announced that he had cancelled his plan for visiting South India and elsewhere and would from now on dedicate himself to the pursuit of the cause in Bihar.

VARIOUS CRITICISMS have been made in regard to the organisation of the campaign in Bihar. One such comment is that though Jayaprakash is very much a rural man his support in Bihar has been mainly urban in character. When I put this doubt to him, Jayaprakash corrected me by saying:

> "No, in fact the main work today is in the villages. It started as an urban movement because it was the students who started it. In Bihar it has penetrated into the remote villages and it has become a village movement, and that is what it is. The non-Adivasis of Chhota Nagpur are also involved, but the Adivasis not so much. The difficulty with them is that the college students who are Adivasis get a stipend. They have formed a Jharkhand Navnirman Samiti. They told me that they can't do anything because their stipends will otherwise be taken away."[3]

When I once asked Jayaprakash why he had concentrated on youth, his reply was interesting. He said:

> "You and I have gone through the socialist phase. You were not a Marxist in the same sense as I was, but I was a confirmed Marxist and we believed in

[3] *Everyman's* has reported on two surveys made in this connection, one in June 1974 and the other at the end of the year. The earlier one, which was a poll taken of *satyagrahis* to be found in Bihar prisons at that time, showed that 80 per cent of the *satyagrahis* came from rural areas, while the latest survey has corroborated the fact that a decisive majority come from the villages. The allegation that the backward classes have kept aloof from Jayaprakash's movement is also refuted by the second poll which shows that no less than 40% of the four hundred *satyagrahis* arrested in the Saran District in October 1974 belonged to the backward or Scheduled classes.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the leadership of the industrial working classes in a revolution. Now, the Indian industrial working class is more or less a petit bourgeois class. Their standard of living is higher than the living standards of the lower middle class, for instance. If you compare their wages with the wages of agricultural labour, they [the industrial working class] are much better off. So I don't think they are a revolutionary force at all. They will always be in the sphere of 'economism.' From what has happened generally in the USA, Japan, and recently in Indonesia and Thailand, I worked it out in my mind that it is the youth who must take the lead in this, and history proves me to be correct."

I mentioned to Jayaprakash that there was some criticism that he was counting too much on his charisma to see him through and was not giving adequate attention to creating a cadre of workers. To this his answer was:

> "As far as cadres are concerned, we have been trying in Bihar to train new cadres and I have been revolving in my mind a programme for one lakh volunteers for a Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini. These will be people who will have no attachment to any political party, no attachment to any student or youth organisation which has political affiliations. . . ."

Yet another criticism has been that Jayaprakash was not attending to the important question of succession as every good leader should. To this Jayaprakash's comment was:

> "I don't think it will be possible for any individual to take the place which somehow has been given to me. It must be, I suppose, a group of people. At the national level it will be very difficult. Well I do not know how many years I have in store. It can't be helped. It can't be manufactured. Like the revolution, it will have to come."

PERHAPS THERE HAS BEEN MORE DEBATE about the legitimacy or otherwise of the demand by Jayaprakash and his followers for the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly than on any other aspect. The Prime Minister and her supporters have denounced this demand as "undemocratic" and the Communists and their fellow-travellers have naturally gone one better and denounced it as "fascist." The argument is that whoever challenges the right of those who have been given a mandate to rule at a popular election is thwarting the functioning of democracy.

This point of view can of course be challenged at various levels. First of all, Jayaprakash was not trying to substitute a government *not* elected by the people in Bihar in place of one that *is*. All he was demanding is that this particular government, that has demonstrated its corrupt nature and has forfeited the support of the people of Bihar, should resign, that the Assembly should be dissolved and that a fresh election should be called for, *precisely* so that the people of Bihar may elect a more representative government. J.P.'s own rejoinder on this point is clear:

> "The Bihar movement, while demanding electoral reform in order to make elections as fair and free, as inexpensive and as representative as possible, does not aim at establishing a partyless democracy. . . . That is an ultimate aim which can be realised only in a classless—and also a casteless—society. As for the next elections, whenever they are held, it is obvious that they will be according to the existing Constitutional and electoral law. I am doing nothing to thwart that."

THERE ARE SEVERAL CRITICS who, while conceding the legality of the demand for the dissolution of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, take the line that such a demand should only be promoted by strictly legal methods of agitation and that any violation of law in the nature of *satyagraha* or breach of prohibitory orders or police regulations is not permissible. This objection raises fundamental and philosophical issues.

Normally, a liberal democrat would not encourage or resort to a breach of law; but there is a qualification to this generalisation and that is that those making the laws represent the will of the people and that there is nothing in such laws that is oppressive or that violates the individual conscience. So, on the other extreme, the liberal would justify the validity of a revolution when human liberties are destroyed by régimes which obviously oppress the people.

Jayaprakash has repeatedly explained that he himself was fully converted to the Bihar students' call for dismissal of the State Government and the dissolution of the State Assembly after the brutal police firings in Gaya and the refusal of the State Government and Assembly to respond to the plea for an independent enquiry. In other words, a government that has violated the civil liberties and the rights of the citizens is no longer entitled to demand explicit obedience to its laws.

ON 15 FEBRUARY 1975, Jayaprakash, while addressing government employees in Delhi, warned them against the possibility of the Congress Government in Delhi doing what Sheik Mujibur Rehman has done in Bangladesh, namely, paving the way to the establishment of a one-party dictatorship, and urged them to see that this was not allowed to happen. He feared that by misusing the declaration of the State of Emergency which had been wrongly kept alive for several years, the Union Government might illegally seek to extend the life of the Lok Sabha after the expiry of its term next year. This, it may be recalled, is what has already happened in Ceylon. In a democracy those who do not leave the seat of power, despite the demand by the majority of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the people as had happened in Bihar, should, Jayaprakash urged, be treated as "traitors." While the time has not yet come to give a call to the people to revolt against such leaders, government employees should refuse to obey such orders as were "immoral" or "wrong."

The question of the legitimacy of the present Union Government and its right to alter the Constitution to the detriment of the citizen becomes relevant at this stage. It is well known that the present Government owes its mandate to 43% of the voters who cast their votes in the General Elections to Parliament of March 1971. When it is recalled that those who voted constituted only 54% of the electorate, one is led to the startling result that those who actually voted for the Congress Party now in office in Delhi represented only around 24% of the entire electorate. Can a Government supported by only one in four voters of voting age claim a mandate not only to rule the country but to enact such flagrantly anti-people, anti-democratic Amendments to the Constitution as the 24th and 25th Amendments?

There may be more than one answer to this question, but Gandhiji's answer was clear. According to him even one individual citizen has the right to break a law and take the consequences if his inner voice or conscience tells him that the law is a lawless law and should not be accepted. There are two limitations to this right. One is the maintenance of non-violence and the other is the readiness to take the consequences of the act of *satyagraha* and not to run away. According to this Gandhian test, Jayaprakash and his followers cannot but be deemed to be true *satyagrahis*.

Indeed, even those who are in authority today came to power by resorting to the same methods during the struggle for national independence. If their present argument held good, not they but the British Viceroy would still be ruling India!

## *Criticising J.P.*

DOUBTS ABOUT SOME of J.P.'s activities do not appear to have been altogether stilled even in Sarvodaya circles. By the end of 1974, the controversy that had raged earlier between the two Sarvodaya leaders, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan, and which had been settled as far back as July 1974, came to life again. An outsider might be forgiven for observing that the arguments between these two Sarvodaya leaders tend to be of a somewhat esoteric nature, such as those between Catholics and Protestants or between Stalinists and Trotskyists. Be that as it may, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi challenged Jayaprakash in November 1974 to test the wishes of the people of Bihar by waiting for the General Elections to the State Assembly, Jayaprakash felt compelled to accept the challenge.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave had been reported as expressing his disquiet over J.P.'s undue interest in elections. It was pointed out, however, that neither Jayaprakash nor any member of the Sarvodaya movement proposes to stand for election either to Parliament or to the Bihar State Assembly. What they were engaged in was to promote the establishment of organs of people's power from the villages upwards so that, as and when the time comes, they may put up good men of the people's choice as candidates as distinct from those nominated by political parties. This is an endeavour at developing grassroots democracy at the village level, and it would indeed appear to be strange to argue that this would be contrary to the principles of Gandhiji who also talked incessantly of "*Gram Swaraj*" and the decentralisation of political and economic power.

Jayaprakash has been at pains to point out that he had explained in his speech (18 November in Patna) that the responsibility for dragging the issue of the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly and the resignation of the Ministry into the electoral arena lay squarely on Mrs Gandhi's shoulders, and that he had no alternative but to accept her challenge. According to him, "the issue to be decided at the elections, whenever they take place, is not whether the Congress wins or loses, but whether the people of Bihar are with the struggle or against it."

Jayaprakash has pleaded that what is contemplated by him is more in the nature of a referendum than a normal election to a legislature. On 14 February 1975, he challenged those in authority to hold a referendum in Bihar to determine the extent of popular support for the demands for the dismissal of the State Government and the dissolution of the Assembly. He said:

> "For me the election is just another battleground for the people's and students' struggle, and the arena we have entered is not that of elections but of an on-going revolutionary struggle whose aim is not merely a change of government but a total social change. Thus, I and my colleagues in the Sarva Seva Sangh, who still form a very large majority, repudiate the charge of deviation. It is not political parties with which we are identifying ourselves but with people struggling against a corrupt, oppressive and incompetent régime and an iniquitous social order."

While Jayaprakash's plea carries conviction, the apprehension continues among some of his supporters of a real danger coming from too much involvement with political parties and electoral activities. The danger is of his being

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tarred with the multicoloured party brush, and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had a point when, in an interview with the *New York Times* (February 1975), she said: "Each [political party] thinks that through him they may get something which they have not got on their own."

In an obvious reference to Jayaprakash in a speech made in April, the Prime Minister went out of her way to ask: "How can such persons who continue to seek favours from the monied people and keep in constant touch with them dare to speak of corruption?"

In what was described by a newspaper as a blunt riposte to the Prime Minister's remarks about him, Jayaprakash said that he was "prepared to pay the price for speaking out against the public wrongs of the high and mighty in the land." In a rejoinder, written more in sorrow than in anger, he urged the Prime Minister not to presume to teach him and the Sarvodaya workers where their duty lay. He went on patiently to point out that "no whole-time social worker who has no independent source of income can live without the help of personal friends who have the means." He pleaded that if the Prime Minister's yardstick were to be applied, "Gandhiji would be found to be the most corrupt of us all because his entire entourage was supported by his rich admirers."

JAYAPRAKASH IS A MAN who has never cultivated personal enemies. As it happens, both his wife Prabhavati and he had great personal affection for Indira whom they regarded as their daughter. Prabhavati had been a close friend of Indira's mother, Kamla Nehru, and Jayaprakash once told me how, after Prabhavati had passed away, he had told Indira Gandhi that Prabhavati had preserved all her mother's affectionate letters to her. Jayaprakash, even when he criticised Jawaharlal Nehru, as he had to from time to time, always addressed Nehru as *bhai* (brother) and, despite their differences, the two never quarrelled. One can therefore imagine how deeply Indira Gandhi's uncharitable remarks must have stung Jayaprakash and what a deep scar they must have left.

Yet when I questioned Jayaprakash as to whether the Prime Minister's remark had made any difference to his conduct and whether his later steps might have been different if she had not made that attack on him, Jayaprakash replied: "We have been in politics long enough and, as you know, our communist friends have been vilifying me and calling me all kinds of names. No, I don't think Mrs Gandhi's attack on me made any difference. I *was* angry and I issued a very strong rejoinder. But there was nothing personal. What I have been doing is nothing against her personally. If, however, she stands in the way of a revolution, she will have to go."

It is perhaps natural that leaders of the political parties concerned should seek to use Jayaprakash's moral prestige as an umbrella under which to shelter, but the question is to what extent Jayaprakash should allow this process to take place. It was thus a matter for relief when Jayaprakash publicly declined the honour of leadership of the Opposition parties offered to him in Delhi on 25 November, since Jayaprakash had everything to lose and little to gain from too much proximity to these parties and their leaders.

The dangers of any such identification were obvious. First of all, what makes people rally round Jayaprakash throughout India is that he is a good man. If once he descends to the level of the politicians who have failed the people and democracy over the last two decades, he too would be devalued.

A more down-to-earth loss would be the fact that, by the very nature of his identification with Opposition parties, Jayaprakash would cease to be a national leader and, like the Prime Minister, become a factional one. Man to man, and left to themselves, members of the ruling Congress are, by and large, it may be claimed, no worse than members of the Opposition parties. Indeed, coming from the same homes and families, they could hardly be very different. It is the possession of power that may corrupt them and make them appear much worse. Why then should Jayaprakash, who enjoys the esteem and regard of a very large number of members of the party in power, make enemies of them and drive them to regard him as an opponent by lining up with Opposition parties in an electoral contest? Finally, can Jayaprakash afford to accept the assurances of good behaviour offered by the leaders of these political parties? Does their record justify this faith?

I once asked Jayaprakash whether he could really claim that there had been a change of heart and how he was going to protect himself from being tarred with the politicians' brush. I conceded that in Bihar he could handle this matter because he was very much the stronger factor but, outside Bihar, how did he propose to get the cooperation of the parties while at the same time not getting involved in their petty squabbles and differences? Jayaprakash replied:

> "Well, Minoo, I have answered this question in Delhi to the extent that it can be answered at this stage. If the movement in the rest of the States is started by political parties, it is bound to fail. Therefore I have been saying that there must be a people's movement also. The students and non-party people must come forward and the political parties might form a part of it. As a matter of fact, if elections take place, there is nothing to replace them except a people's candidate in some con-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> stituencies where the organisation and the movement are very strong. There people's candidates might be set up. The Struggle Committees might set up their own candidates and not accept any party candidate. Therefore, for the rest of the country I do not know if there is much chance of a movement being developed by the political parties joining hands together. If they cannot adjust themselves, they must form part of the movement that has started."

A DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE CRITICISM levelled against Jayaprakash is that he tends to fight shy of the problem of power and that, while he seeks to destroy what there is, he is not prepared to take responsibility and offer himself as an alternative either in Patna or in New Delhi. He has been described by a British journalist rather picturesquely as a "non-playing captain." I asked J.P. how, if he won the elections in Bihar, about which I had little doubt, he would avoid becoming the *de facto* leader of the party that came into power or the king-maker or the man who nominates the Chief Minister. How would this fit in with his opposition to the establishment of yet another political party? Jayaprakash conceded that the majority in the new Bihar State Assembly would be made up of candidates endorsed by him, since every Opposition candidate would be endorsed by him. At this, I asked who would nominate the Chief Minister. "Well", said Jayaprakash, "I will teach them democracy then. They must sit down and do so by consensus and, if there is no consensus, by the Single Transferable Vote or by some other method. I am not going to nominate any Chief Minister."

I insisted that he would be responsible for the man even if this happened and Jayaprakash agreed that he would be responsible. At this point, I asked him to consider the possibility that, human frailties being what they are, his men might start showing weaknesses and might let him down. Jayaprakash's answer to this was: "The movement will be carried on outside. The pressure will be on. It may be dissociation or it may be a confrontation with them also. I am not committed to any political party."

JAYAPRAKASH'S APPEAL elicited response from a wide variety of people belonging to all creeds and castes and from every walk of life. It is natural that this should be so because his campaign is nothing if not national. At the same time, this creates certain problems. Jayaprakash's appeal cannot be as clear-cut as would be that of a leader of a political party who appeals only to the like-minded. It is something in the nature of a national crusade and it suffers from the diffusiveness of appeal of such a crusade. It is often said of Gandhiji that "he was all things to all men." A similar charge of vagueness in regard to J.P.'s objectives and programme is made in certain quarters. Chief Minister Ghafoor plaintively complained that Jayaprakash did not stick to anything for twenty-four hours at a time and kept shifting his stand.

I have been among those who have drawn J.P.'s attention to the danger that comes from the lack of an articulate and concrete socio-economic programme. Thus, when I met him in Varanasi (on 25 December 1974), I led up to this question by asking him whether he recognised that the magnitude and scale of corruption prevalent in India was of a broad economic nature and not of the venal kind such as that of a policeman on point duty or a railway clerk in a booking office. Added to this normal frailty was the temptation that stemmed from "permit licence raj" or Statism in which the politician and the bureaucrat, both rather poor, enjoyed the power of economic life and death over much more affluent people. This creates a situation where corruption becomes endemic. To put it another way, the smuggler, the black-marketeer and the tax-evader are the creations of the Government's economic policies which run contrary to human nature and to the laws of economics. When a man is denied a fair profit, he chooses to operate underground as does the *tolkachi* (spiv) in the Soviet Union, despite the shooting squad, fifty years after the revolution. My question to Jayaprakash was: "Why do you not point out clearly in your speeches and articles that the source of corruption is Statism?"

Jayaprakash's reply, which was quite frank, was: "I quite agree with you." He went on to add:

> "Because we function in a scarcity economy, some sort of public distribution system, some sort of control of prices, all that has to come. But for that the administration and political leadership must be more honest than we have. They are not. This is a very dangerous thing and this is something that the Opposition parties must also be careful about, because I don't think normally they would be very superior. I hope they are. But the temptation of doing these things is very great. So I must say 'no' to a completely free economy without any permits. I am for minimum controls and well-devised controls well thought out. I think the bureaucracy and the corrupt politicians are both hand in glove. They want these kinds of control, which have completely failed, to continue for their benefit and not for the benefit of the country, I am sure, or the consumer, for instance. . . . If small people put their hands to it, I suppose we will have a better system. . . ."

At this I asked Jayaprakash whether he stood by an earlier statement of his made some years ago that the "Welfare State" creates a "creeping paralysis."

"It does", Jayaprakash replied. "I like the Sarvodaya idea, Gandhi's idea, that 'that government is best which governs the least.' I would like

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people more and more to look after themselves rather than to look to the State."

I pressed J.P. further by saying that my earlier question had not been asked because of any abstract considerations but the danger that some people saw that, in the absence of a clear-cut economic posture, if a chaotic situation were to develop when he might not be there to control it, the fruits of this agitation might well drop into the lap of the Naxalites and the Marxist Communists, who profess a certain measure of sympathy for him, rather than into the hands of Liberal Democrats or Social Democrats, as he would presumably prefer.

"There is no foolproof guarantee against that", Jayaprakash said in reply. "These are the risks of a movement of this kind. These risks have to be taken. The Russian Revolution could very well have taken a more healthy line."

When I asked Jayaprakash whether he would not reject the C.P.(M) support on the ground that, till they gave up their dogma, they could not really be legitimate allies in the fight for a free society, Jayaprakash demurred and said: "I don't think so because I hope there is enough real dedication in them to the cause of the people rather than a commitment to theoretical ideology to change and to learn. That is well worth trying."

These misgivings notwithstanding, I myself am not sure that Jayaprakash would be wise to commit himself to a cut-and-dry socio-economic programme. He was not in government nor was he offering himself as the leader of an alternative government ready to take over the reins of office. He is on a moral crusade attempting a total revolution in the minds and lives of the people and at this stage it would perhaps be a pity if he were to limit his appeal to certain sections of society and repel others by outlining a programme of the nature that various political parties have evolved.

## *Mao? Lenin?*

THE POSITION, HOWEVER, is quite different when it comes to certain remarks of Jayaprakash appearing in the press reportedly lauding Mao Tse-tung and Lenin. On more than one occasion, Jayaprakash is reported to have made what appeared to be appreciative references to Mao's achievements in China. When I put this to Jayaprakash during a visit to Patna in February 1975, he explained that he had been misquoted by the press and that what he had said was that, if he were driven to a choice between Communist China and Soviet Russia, he would prefer the former because, while the Soviet régime had degenerated and become fossilised, the Mao régime had not lost all its dynamism. I could not desist from asking Jayaprakash who had driven him to this choice between the two communist powers. I also reminded him that one of the finest things about Gandhiji was what Louis Fischer in his book, *The Great Challenge*, describes as "double rejection"—a refusal to choose between two evils and being driven to the choice of "the lesser evil."

In so far as his references to Lenin were concerned, J.P. said that the context in which he had sometimes mentioned Lenin in his public utterances was concerning the point he was making in regard to electoral and parliamentary politics. In that regard he had mentioned that the two men by whom he had been successively influenced, namely, Lenin and then Gandhi, had both a common attitude on this particular point, illustrated by Lenin's coolness to participation in the *Duma*, the Russian Parliament set up by the Czar from 1906 onwards, and Gandhiji's attitude towards the British sponsored legislatures in the twenties and the thirties. The question arises whether, when referring to this point, J.P. should not also draw attention to the much more fundamental conflicts and disagreements between the two men. Is it not now too late in history for anyone to repudiate Stalin and cling to Lenin? It was Lenin who imported into Marxism both character assassination and physical liquidation. It was Lenin who had, after seizing power by force, dissolved at the point of a bayonet the newly elected Constituent Assembly. According to Solzhenitsyn, who ought to know, it was Lenin who had first established slave labour camps.

IF THE AGITATION led by Jayaprakash grows and the decline in the Prime Minister's popularity recorded in the recent polls organised by the Gallup affiliate in this country, the Indian Institute of Public Opinion, continues, there is little doubt that a new balance of forces will develop in this country. The question then arises as to how the situation may be expected to resolve itself. There appear to be a variety of ways in which this question may be answered and more than one scenario is possible.

The first of these is a confrontation and a clash *à outrance*. The dangers of a fight to the finish are fairly clear. On the popular side the forces of revolution might get out of hand leading to violence and the distortion of the aims of the movement. This would be a tragedy. Whatever happened, Jayaprakash and what he stands for would be defeated.

On the other side, the picture may be even uglier. An outright victory may only be possible for those in office by a seizure of power and the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

establishment of a dictatorship, accompanied perhaps by more brutal repression than anything British rule had perpetrated in this country.

If this does not happen, then only an adjustment between the Prime Minister and Jayaprakash Narayan may provide the way out. Fortunately, a solution of this nature is made easier by the fact that, despite all the current talk of "fascism", the rule of law, by and large, still prevails and a dialogue is possible. It was the acceptance of certain inhibitions by both the British in India and Mahatma Gandhi that made a peaceful transfer of power possible. The maintenance of the present restraint on both sides should make sharing of power not too difficult. In this context, it is a pity that terms like fascism should be bandied about. It is, of course, idiotic to describe Jayaprakash as a fascist and nobody who knows the meaning of the word, except of course the communists who habitually hurl it at their opponents all over the globe, would use it. On the other hand, can one call the Prime Minister and her government fascist? If they really were, would Jayaprakash be alive and functioning, would the great march in Delhi of 6 March have passed off so peacefully and successfully, and would not a great deal in India be different from what it is?

Another helpful factor is that the attempt at revolution is a peaceful one and there is little bitterness and no call for blood on the side of those in revolt despite the death of more than a hundred young men in Bihar.

Perhaps the most important positive factor that can make for adjustment is that, for a rarity, the leader of the revolutionary forces has no desire to take over the leadership of the government. Thus there is no question of displacement of the one by the other nor a transfer of power, but a sharing of power, with the younger of the two personalities executing the policies of the Government and the older one influencing and guiding them.

JAYAPRAKASH had said a few months ago, when asked, that he was ready to state his position and had suggested conditions under which a *détente* would be possible. His proposals evoked no response. Indeed, at a public meeting at Shivaji Park in Bombay (on 26 January 1975), he pointed out that it was not he who had created the confrontation but the Prime Minister when she needlessly announced after her talk with him that she would rather resign as Prime Minister than agree to the dissolution of the State Assembly. Jayaprakash asked why she should have blown up a demand of a local nature into such a big issue. In that speech Jayaprakash also recalled how Gandhiji had never thought conflict to be essential or inevitable. Even when faced by foreign rule he had urged that by constructive work, along with non-cooperation, the need for conflict could be avoided.

For the Prime Minister, the choice should not really be a difficult one. Is she not astute enough to know what happens to those who come to power, like Beneš, Masaryk and Dubček, with the help of the communists? Neither communist dogma nor practice tolerates deviationists for long. When they have served their purpose they are destroyed.

Not very dissimilar has been the fate of those who have tried by means of demagogy to establish an authoritarian régime in the countries of Asia and Africa. As far back as 25 July 1969, while opposing in the Lok Sabha the introduction of a Bill to take the place of the Ordinance nationalising the larger banks, I had warned the Prime Minister to desist from following the example of Dr Sukarno of Indonesia and Dr Nkrumah of Ghana. "Today it seems to me", I had said, "that she is trying to tread that path. I want to ask her where are those tinpot dictators today? Where is Dr Nkrumah and where is Dr Sukarno? Let her beware that, if she goes on that path, she will come to the same end."

Would not then sharing power with Jayaprakash, a comrade in the struggle for Independence and a friend of her father's, be a much more attractive alternative, whether from the national or personal point of view? Of course it would mean the end of absolute power. Of course it would mean not being surrounded any longer by stooges and flatterers. Of course it would mean the end of tolerating corrupt colleagues. Of course it would mean a parting of ways with the communists. Most revolutions exact from those in power a much higher price than this. In return there would be the reward of popular affection in place of bitterness and comradeship in place of confrontation.

In the course of a conversation with an Italian journalist, Oriana Fallaci, some time at the end of 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is reported to have said in answer to a question: "All I want to do is a good job until I am no longer able. The day I am no longer able, I will give up before they make me give up." It would be in the spirit of that sapient remark if Indira Gandhi were to invite Jayaprakash's guidance and advice in solving the country's problems and join with him in a campaign for creating a more prosperous, healthier and happier India.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Winifred, Wahnfried, Wagner

## *A Silence is Broken in Bayreuth*

RICHARD WAGNER'S SON Siegfried once described his wife as "beautiful, gay and shrewd", Hitler addressed her simply as "Winni", and, while old Wagnerians still revere *"die Herrin von Bayreuth"* to this day and many neo-Wagnerians have since 1951 regarded her as living proof that Bayreuth has "overcome its past", her rebellious son Wieland publicly repudiated her as late as 1965 because "she still believes in the *Führer*'s final victory. . . ." Thus, for half-a-century now, Winifred Wagner has stood with rocklike imperturbability amid the billows of the passing years, of changing styles and opinions.

Dominated by Cosima Wagner from 18 onwards, she herself succeeded that *"hohe Frau"* and keeper of the Grail to become "mistress of the Villa Wahnfried", high priestess of the "green hill", and rather unorthodox champion of "the Master's" heritage. She also became a fanatical admirer of the *Führer* and turned the Bayreuth Festival into "Hitler's court theatre" (as Thomas Mann called it). She has to this day remained an autocratic trustee of the Wagner dynasty, first lady of the Bayreuth clan, and a staunch National-Socialist.

Wagner's descendants knew why, after 1948, they made his daughter-in-law adhere so strictly to the public speaking ban imposed on her after the War by a Bayreuth de-nazification tribunal. It was surely the only way to accomplish the unpopular task of disburdening and de-nazifying the Festival and Wagner's work. Now, without arousing any immediate public attention, Winifred Wagner has at long last spoken out freely—and raised the ghosts that were laid 30 years ago.

GOTTFRIED, son of the Festival's present director, Wolfgang Wagner, had to work on his family (and his grandmother) for a month or so before they

WINIFRED WAGNER *was born Winifred Williams in 1897 at Hastings in England. Orphaned young, she was adopted by 78-year-old Karl Klindworth, a pupil of Liszt, friend of Wagner, and director of the Berlin Conservatoire. In 1914 Klindworth brought her to Bayreuth; and one year later she married Siegfried Wagner (1869–1930), son of Richard Wagner and director of the Bayreuth Festival, who was 28 years her senior. There were four children: Wieland, Wolfgang, Verena and Friedelind. Friedelind Wagner quarrelled with her mother, went to America in 1939 and wrote an account of the Hitler era entitled "Night over Bayreuth"; she became reconciled with the family only in* 1953.

*After Siegfried Wagner's death in 1930, Winifred took over the running of the Festival, whose artistic status she further enhanced by appointing the Heinz Tietjen/Wilhelm Furtwängler/Emil Preetorius triumvirate and by engaging Richard Strauss to replace the departed Arturo Toscanini. Because of her membership in the Nazi Party and her close friendship with Hitler, she was classified in* 1947 *as* "belastete" *(incriminated) and, on appeal, as* "minder-belastete" *(less incriminated). Her assets were seized; she was compelled to renounce her Festival directorship and the right to speak in public; and her house next door to the villa "Wahnfried" was requisitioned by the American authorities.*

*Winifred Wagner lived in the Fichtelgebirge until 1957, when she moved back to Bayreuth. After its reinauguration, the Festival was directed by Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner between 1951 and 1966; and it has, since Wieland's untimely death, been run by Wolfgang alone. Winifred Wagner, whose entire inheritance (Festspielhaus, Villa Wahnfried, and the valuable Wagner Archive) was converted into a foundation—after surviving branches of the family had been bought out—is now engaged in reconstructing Wahnfried as a Wagner Museum.*



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would expose themselves to the questions and camera of Hans Jürgen Syberberg. It was an act of "disburdenment" for Gottfried too, an act of self-justification by one who had since childhood been abused as a scion of the "Nazi clan", a way of cleansing the family and gaining a certain personal release from years of guilt by association. Undoubtedly, the new film is as much his as Syberberg's.

For Syberberg on the other hand, who has already produced impressive documentary portraits of Bert Brecht, Fritz Kortner, Romy Schneider (and also a sex-film-maker, Brummer), Bayreuth represents a logical half-way house between *King Ludwig* and *Karl May* and the third part of his "German trilogy", a film about Hitler. The first two films were already pervaded by the rumble of Wagnerian music; there were also natural affinities and/or direct links between King Ludwig and Wagner, Karl May and Hitler, Wagner and May, Bayreuth and Hitler. These films themselves contained a Wagnerian element, and now at Bayreuth Syberberg was, so to speak, wading through the primeval ooze of his own aesthetic.

His rules in approaching with camera and microphone this unusual project included: absolute fidelity, no optical trimmings, the maintenance of chronological order when editing interviews, and acceptance of the finished product by Frau Winifred. So far, only a rough version has been seen by Wolfgang Wagner, now engaged in preparations for *Parsifal*. Shooting occupied five days in April and the film has expanded to a running-time of five hours. A month or so ago, under the auspices of a "Syberberg retrospective", it received its first showing at the Paris *Cinémathèque* before an audience of about 200 which had dwindled by the end to some 30 (among them three members of the Wagner family).

Five whole hours of Winifred Wagner, almost all devoted to medium close-ups or head shots: a 78-year-old woman recounting her life story with remarkable verve and vitality, her mode of expression ranging from the naive to the maladroit, inhibited and slightly stiff at first, apt to break off in search of a key-word. She talks away quite matter-of-factly in a deep, husky voice, breathes hard as she cudgels her memory, laughs drily and exclaims: "Fancy him keeping those things running all the time!" (meaning camera and microphone), or issues a terse decree: "*Na*, let's stop there for today!" Her face, never relaxed, ever abrim with energy and determination, resembles that of a Mother Courage, an everyday heroine painted by an exponent of socialist realism. I couldn't help not disliking the bluff old lady.

She gives a minute account of her childhood, of how she was "reared entirely in the spirit of Wagner and Bayreuth", of her daily life at the Villa Wahnfried with Wagner's widow Cosima, her husband Siegfried and her unloved sisters-in-law. With an old lady's delight in holding forth, she interpolates anecdotes and details, spends much time thumbing through photo albums, identifies everyone in the pictures and chats away blithely as if presiding over a family gab-fest.

It only dawns on one by degrees how diplomatically she has been conducting herself, how she relies on her robust charm and appealing vivacity to help her skirt awkward subjects, how she glosses over and parries, hesitates and retreats, remains constantly alert and, with no little skill, manages to combine objective mendacity with total subjective candour—how her lengthy silences can sometimes speak volumes. Often, she simply breaks off and laughs that deep, husky laugh of hers, which sounds a trifle unpleasant, like a dog's growl.

HITLER is the film's pet theme. Prodded by the interviewer's questions, Winifred Wagner gradually drops her guard and reverts to the *Führer* again and again. First, after a long pause for thought, comes a careful statement: "Great public interest always seems to centre on my relationship with Hitler. . . ." Next: "It was a purely human, personal and private bond based on our admiration and love of Richard Wagner." Then, on the third or fourth day of filming: "I shall always remember him with gratitude because he literally prepared the ground for me here in Bayreuth. . . ." The post-War attacks on her—and him—were exaggerated and unjustified. At last, with all the flood-gates flung wide: "I simply refuse to be deprived of what I considered good and human in the man. . . . He was such a unique personality that I wouldn't want to have missed the experience." And again, just at the end: "If Hitler walked through that door today, I should be just as pleased and happy to see him here as ever I was. As for his darker side—I know it exists, but not for me because it's beyond my ken."

Or rather, because she refuses to acknowledge this side of Hitler and even now feels no obligation to do so. "Nobody ever talked politics at our home. . . . To us, he was never *'der Führer'*. . . but always that 'fascinating and interesting man'. . . ." She knew him for 22 years and "was never humanly disappointed by him—apart, of course, from the things that were happening outside. But they didn't affect me."

WINIFRED WAGNER ignored *die Politik* then and ignores it still. Such is the most political aspect of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this autobiography: that a woman should cling so obtusely to the fiction of Hitler the private individual, whom she can admire as "a man and a personality" above and beyond his "darker side" and "the things that were happening outside." Winifred also came to the conclusion that her National Socialism was "wholly bound up with the personality of Adolf Hitler—nothing else interested me." Which is why she "did not feel in the slightest guilty of any crime or misdemeanour after the War." She is a "madly loyal person", and she just did not feel "competent to pass judgment on the other matters." Moreover: "I'm a thoroughly unpolitical creature at heart." (Leni Riefenstahl has a similar knack of talking about the Third Reich in almost identical words.)

For all that, Winifred Wagner was enough of a political animal to know what was actually happening "outside." "Naturally, a lot of people were shoved into concentration camps after the outbreak of War." (*Natürlich* and *gesteckt* are the words.) Winifred forwarded many petitions from Jews and homosexuals to Hitler—according to her, with invariable success. This helped her a great deal after the War. She herself was imperilled by the fact that her daughter Friedelind wrote anti-Hitler articles in England. "If we hadn't been members of the Wagner family we should have been packed off to a concentration camp, one and all—surely that's obvious."

However obvious Winifred found and still finds it, she continues to rhapsodise about her "personal and private" friend with undiminished fervour. She concedes that even in 1923, when they first met, "I formed a strong and profound impression of him—as a personality. In particular, his eyes were immensely attractive—very blue, large and expressive eyes." Hitler had "the cordiality and warmth of an Austrian", and he also "played the piano quite nicely." People called him demonic, but she would prefer to construe that "in the Goethean sense."

What of the oft-recurring rumours of a match between "Winni" and "Wolf", as she and Hitler called each other in private? "Absolutely ridiculous!" Nevertheless, her reasons for dismissing the idea smack of a grievous renunciation: Hitler never meant to get married at all, not even to that creature Eva Braun, with whom he never made a single public appearance. As for herself, she was bound by the terms of Siegfried Wagner's will, which assigned her the Festival directorship only for as long as she did not remarry.

So Winni and Wolf could only see each other when she visited him in the Berlin *Reichskanzlei* or when he "came here to Bayreuth as a Wagner fan and friend of the family." When not attending one of the Festivals, he came "to enjoy some family life" and "to see the children." Often, when he had unobtrusively broken his journey "after dark" and she had chauffeured him to Wahnfried from the hotel, he insisted on being taken to the children's nursery. "Actually, they looked on him as a kindly uncle, and he really behaved like one when he was with us. He was absolutely sweet with the children." He spoilt Wieland in particular, exempting him from military service and promoting his early paintings. He also visited Wolfgang in a Berlin hospital when he was wounded. A mild reproach was levelled at Wieland's subsequent "root and branch" condemnation of Hitler: "One shouldn't forget things like that!"

HITLER STARTED ATTENDING the Bayreuth Festivals in 1933. From 1936 onwards Winifred gave him the run of her husband's house next door to Villa Wahnfried—the one she occupies today—and he would move in with his entire staff and retinue. He backed every new production at Bayreuth with 50,000 marks from "his private purse", received the performers and discussed the operas with the family until the small hours. During the War years he helped to perpetuate the Festival by releasing artists and saw to it that audiences (war-wounded, decorated heroes, nursing staff, industrial workers) were tended and transported by the *KdF* or Strength-through-Joy clubs.

The charge that she "placed the Festival at the service of Nazism", says Winifred, is "sheer nonsense." For one thing, Hitler banned all personal demonstrations at the *Festspielhaus*; for another, she once permitted herself "a little private joke" which involved making up two members of the male chorus in *Götterdämmerung* to resemble Goebbels and Göring (nobody spotted it). But she must have forgotten that the Festival programmes hailed Wagner as an early member-in-spirit of the Nazi Party and likened Parsifal's final act of redemption to the coming of Hitler.

She does, however, remember that Goebbels, Speer, Rosenberg, Göring and other dignitaries visited the *Führer* at Bayreuth, that members of the Hitler Youth (*HJ*), German Girls' League (*BDM*) and various folk ensembles travelled there "to catch a glimpse" of the *Führer* during his "triumphal procession" from Wahnfried to the *Festspielhaus*, where she, Winifred, having had her hand kissed and been greeted as *"gnädige Frau"*, conducted him to his box. She also recalls that the people of Bayreuth were extremely considerate and never besieged Hitler in his quarters ("here on my home ground he enjoyed absolute peace and quiet"), that he slept from four a.m. till eleven or midday and observed a strictly vegetarian diet ("the most you could induce him to eat was *Leberknödel*").

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Family friend and kindly uncle, hand-kissing and liver dumplings; horror incarnate portrayed as a solid citizen in an idyllic retreat; daily fascism converted into unfathomable stupidity and ignorance; history and the oppressive past transformed, 30 years afterwards, into a blithe and carefree reduction of ultimate frightfulness to the status of vain anecdotes and windy banality. Not even the most muddle-headed Wagnerian, politically indifferent as he might be, could succeed in trivialising this astonishingly unimpaired ideological presence into a kind of Nazi nostalgia or even the ludicrous ravings of a human fossil. Certainly it has no connection with Wagner and the new Bayreuth.

BUT WINIFRED WAGNER goes even further. Hitler, you see, just wasn't like that. For instance: "Jewish members and the Jewish husbands and wives of members were invited as a matter of course" to his artists' receptions at Bayreuth, and acts of persecution against the Jews did not really stem from him. "The chief instigator was Streicher in Nuremberg—he was quite impossible", and she never did want to have him at Bayreuth. Hitler was the guiltless victim of malevolent insinuations. "He allowed himself to be unduly influenced and yielded to these radical demands. He should have resisted them, of course." The logical inference: "I can entirely dissociate the Hitler I know from all the things people accuse him of nowadays." All they *accuse* him of, mark you, not all he did. These five hours of Winifred are also a demonstration of political rhetoric.

She still has a perfect command of ruling-class jargon—the vocabulary of those born to command. At Wahnfried she finally asserted her "authority (*die Gewalt*)" after the Chamberlains left; a female employee "served our house faithfully" (*treu gedient*) for 50 years; the Strength-through-Joy audiences were "not a human hotchpotch but genuine and deserving enthusiasts"; the *"Künstlervolk"* to whom she issues annual invitations, as Hitler used to do, she neatly divides into stars and "bit-players"; lastly, the Begum is "a personality who stands out from the common ruck" and whose success demonstrates that "fundamentally, people are ready and eager to create ideals for themselves."

The great and the small, the outstanding personality and the common herd, masters and servants—she can only think in categories like these. No wonder she, her family and all "German-minded people . . . yearned for leadership" after World War I, when "sheer anarchism" reigned, because they had "a very strong sense of Germanhood"; no wonder she blurts out a phrase like *"jüdisch versippt"* (Jewish relatives) or angrily rejects the charge that Richard Wagner paved the way for the Final Solution of the Jewish question. "Nonsense! All Wagner was thinking of was at the most a sort of neutralisation of Jewish cultural influence on political and artistic life in Germany. . . ." At the most.

No less revealing is the language of the orthodox Disciple, of the Theatre Director, and of the autocratic Dowager Empress. Tietjen and Furtwängler, she observes gratefully, "were sweet enough to fall in with my wishes." There were few problems in those days, anyway, because no differences existed between "what Wagner had ordained" and "what was carried out." Not until the Wieland era did "everyone adopt an intellectual approach" to things. But it should always be remembered that, in the case of artists, one is "fundamentally dealing with children"; and members of the family desirous of working on the Festivals must in future "have won their spurs outside Bayreuth and be competent to collaborate here. . . ."

IT IS SOMETIMES HARD to tell whether Winifred Wagner's steadfast Nazism springs from simulated naivety, the cussedness of old age, or genuine conviction. For instance, she went around in the early 1920s collecting for Hitler while he was imprisoned at Landsberg, and her consignments to him included writing paper. *"Du lieber Gott,* now I'm accused of supplying the paper for *Mein Kampf*! No matter what I do, people are always attacking me."

No ambiguities mark her rancour for those who opposed, rebuffed, or deserted her: Toscanini ("he left here in a rage"); Eva Chamberlain ("a very overbearing character"); Wieland (he "ran everything down" and "did nothing but intrigue against us"); Friedelind (she "always wanted to be at the centre of things" but "hasn't really got anywhere"); and the Americans who requisitioned her house for twelve years, first as an officers' mess and latterly as a CIA headquarters, and desecrated the *Festspielhaus* in the cause of vulgar entertainment for the troops ("and they relieved themselves in all the cupboards").

In the closing sequences (filmed with great intensity by Dietrich Lohmann), Winifred Wagner sits in her arm-chair like a stone monument, her wrinkled lips pursed in denial or jutting with defiance, her head tilted back at an angle, listening, wary, ready to do battle; only the throb of the veins in her forehead betrays her inner tension. It is a very aged, very hard and masculine face, the face of an implacable *grande dame* and autocrat—a dragon. She is a fearful old woman.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOR THE REST, Syberberg's cinematic embellishments (which have yet to be fully accepted by his collaborator Gottfried Wagner) fail to carry conviction. Sub-titles are constantly inserted as presumably, aids to detachment, interim information and oblique comment: quotations, brief observations, anticipatory remarks. This is all very well in principle, but the texts are arbitrary and inadequate and never provide more than vague associations of ideas. Worse still are the brief lead-in and tail-piece: solemn, mystical nebulosities delivered in the emotion-charged and unctuous tones of a memorial service.

The same goes for Syberberg's grand design, the great arc linking Ludwig of Bavaria and Adolf Hitler, the interaction of Intellect and Power, the 19th century and the Third Reich as exemplified at the Villa Wahnfried. Abbreviated and restricted in this way, they too remain aromatic platitudes and fragmentary ideas. Perhaps light will be shed on these associated factors by the book version of the film, which will not only embody the text of Winifred's remarks but include a diary kept by Syberberg and, more notably, a documentation in words and pictures by Gottfried Wagner.

Gottfried is also working on a Wagner book with Professor Hans Mayer; Wieland's son "Wummi" (Wolf-Siegfried) is planning a book of his own; and Piper Verlag in Munich is at long last to publish Cosima's diaries . . . Bayreuth's 1976 centenary draws near. This film—historical record, autobiography, family drama, and sombre song of the Norns—should provide Festival-goers with something to think about. One can only hope that some television network here will undertake to show it in full; any form of abridgement would falsify it.

***Wolf Donner***

## Reflections on a Bright Morning

You are dead. So again and again
I return to contemplate this abominable
Brevity of living. How is it so
Loving and exhilarating, so always

Eager a chieftain of living should be
Living no more? It isn't enough
To say, Your perceptions remain; it isn't
Enough to read them, alone, out loud,

And to love them, and to remember you.
Whose investigating presence, brilliant
By day, hovered on shivering extremest
Wings over the night flowers of perfume:

You are not living. There is no you
To whom it can be something
That we live in part by your perceiving,
And praise you. And there, speak

With what resignation we may,
Is the distress. Remain mornings, middays,
Evenings, nights, and men's most curious
Coruscations. But, you are not living.

***Geoffrey Grigson***

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Andrew Waterman*

# The Ploughman's Dream

"Look," came the voice, "Peasant,
mooning your life away at a cow's udder,
transfixed by the shadows of the gibbet and the cross,
it's all been done before—here they are,
humped side by side in that country churchyard.
Get out from under. What you want's a bit of vision.
You could have the whole world in your hand,
go places, get off the ground,
even reach for the moon."

So he came in from fields to the gaunt pit-top,
hungry, and went down.
It was darkness, narrowing, blocked with rockfall,
dust silting memory dry.
He left his body many times behind,
broken or starved, and spawned on many women
new selves harder than the coal;
still crouching, tunnelled on past where
even rats went, or water dripped.

"Look." A kind of vault,
furnished with every wondrous thing
you could find a use for, striplit, air-conditioned.
He knelt, brushed off one last burr clinging to his moleskins,
then wandered around trying switches:
package-meals; dial-a-loan; Ten Great Composers; explosions.
Not far from the World Wild Life microfilm precinct
a computer hulked, luminous, humming.
"It's got everything taped.
Whatever turns up that that doesn't recognise, well . . . ."

It was all there. Even the moon:
"Nothing to it. Look."
Cold, ashen—he balanced it on the palm of his hand.
He didn't know what to do with it.

"Make yourself at home. There's work to be done.
Way out?
I tell you we've pushed back the frontier so far. . . ."

And yet it seemed smaller than
a meadow from which hills had shrugged away
over the skyline to places where beer tasted foreign,
and lightless nights let starry vistas in—
or so he sometimes dreamed—of that,
and, was it, the odour of mixen?
Awaking, he couldn't remember.

"What you want's more of all you've got" came his master's voice:
the face his own on the television screen.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## *Gavin Ewart*

# "A Good Mouse Needs no Preparation"

*—Interview with a policeman, breeder of prize-winning mice, broadcast 9 June 1974 on BBC 4.*

This is an age
when people throw Life quivering on the page,
untidy, crude;
or on a screen or canvas—hot and nude
the Muse lies there
gasping, quite unadorned, completely bare,
while all agree
if she were clothed she wouldn't then be She.
Her lovers, firm
in adoration, pour out words like sperm.
The act is all—
simple intensity, the mating call
we recognise.
Bras, panties, hats are inessential lies.

A certain truth
such wooers have, though they are so uncouth.
Some passionate thought
must still be there; the skilful and untaught
alike must bring
a kind of ardour—or the words won't sing.
The pulsing heart
romantically throbs in the best Art,
but not direct;
for we should emphasise, refine, select.
Pejorative word,
it's "artificial", but it's not absurd,
wrong, or ungood,
to carve the statue from the native wood.

Tool-making man
always improves on Nature, if he can.
The critic raves
about those buffaloes painted in caves
so long ago.
This is what's called "technique" (you want to know?),
magic or not;
it's what we have and animals haven't got.
Some wash their mice
(painting is not allowed) to make them nice,
or use a comb.
I'm on their side—a house is not a home,
and caring helps
verse, painting, music, mice, cubs, kittens, whelps. . . .

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Colin Clark*

# The Remedy for Inflation

## *Some Practical Radical Proposals*

WHEN a building catches fire, it is the combustion of one object which generates the heat required to ignite the next. Unless counter-measures are taken, the fire spreads further and further, becoming more and more difficult to control, until there is nothing left.

It is exactly the same with inflation. It is the rise in one price or wage which creates the conditions which will force rises in other prices or wages a few months later. The counter-measures required to stop inflation will have to be immediate and drastic.

The required measures will not be an "incomes policy." This evasive phrase had its origin in the muddled brain of the late Lord Beveridge. The word "policy" means nothing more than thinking out the principles on which you intend to act later. Those who talk about "incomes policy" are trying to obscure the action which in fact they propose, namely legal limitations on wages and profits. As abundant experiences now show, they do not work, even in war-time, when public opinion is almost entirely in their favour. There are innumerable ways in which employers and trade unions can evade them, while complying with the letter of the law. Even Communist governments—who have as one of their first objectives the suppression of free trade unions—are unable to control wages and prices if they create too high a pressure of demand, as Stalin discovered.

It is true that inflation spreads by self-reinforcing measures. But its original cause is excessive demand, and it can only be put right by checking demand. And the appropriate point of action is government demand. A substantial proportion of government expenditure now is financed by borrowing, which has obvious inflationary effects. Government expenditure is *now*, while the effects of taxation on private consumption are delayed, and, if taxation is at excessive rates, may not appear at all—people will pay their taxes out of their savings rather than by reducing consumption.

The idea that excessive government expenditure, even if financed by taxation, will cause inflation is not new. In the December 1945 issue of *Economic Journal* I concluded, on the evidence available, that government expenditure in excess of 25% of net national product (*i.e.* about 22% of gross national product) had inflationary effects. It may not be generally known that Keynes agreed with these conclusions, not only in publishing them in his capacity as editor of *Economic Journal*, but also in private correspondence.

For the past 30 years nearly all countries have been exceeding these limits—and have been suffering inflation.

THERE ARE STILL some people naive enough to think that if the government provides people with education, pensions, medical service, etc. they will then be willing to save the amounts which they would have had to spend in providing them for themselves. What a hope! When a family is provided with free medical service, or whatever, it immediately wants to spend the money thus saved on other objects.

*LIKE the English weather, everybody talks about inflation, nobody does anything about it. We have accordingly invited Dr Colin Clark, one of the world's most distinguished economists, to give his views on the subject; they will be discussed by critics in subsequent numbers of* ENCOUNTER. *Dr Clark is the author of the classic work on "The Conditions of Economic Progress" (1940), "Population Growth and Land Use" (1967), and "Starvation or Plenty?" (1970). He is Director of the Institute of Economic Progress at Australia's Monash University.*



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is required to stop inflation is the dismantling of the Welfare State. "The Welfare State" has become what Americans call a "weasel-word." "Is it not the duty of the State to provide for its people's welfare?", its defenders will demand, indignantly. Of course it is. But this is very far from saying that it is the duty of the State to provide its people with welfare services which they are perfectly capable of providing for themselves. It is the duty of the State to help the poor to obtain the welfare services which they need—and only the poor. The idea of the State providing welfare services to the average family is inherently self-defeating. They will have to pay in taxation, not only for the services, which they may or may not need, but also for the vast cumbrous bureaucracy which administers them, and they will end up considerably worse off. All political parties however are deeply committed to the Welfare State. It is the votes of the big block of about-average income families which they are seeking, and they have little concern for the poor. The parties vie with each other in the extravagance of the services which they offer, all the time mendaciously conveying the impression that someone else is going to pay for them. The principle therefore must be that provision must be made for the genuinely poor, and that everyone else must (expletive deleted) well provide for themselves.

So THE FIRST STEP will have to be to make full and adequate provision for the genuinely poor, followed by the dismantling of all other Welfare State activities. There are a number of measures demanded by justice and good government which, in normal times, might have been the subject of long and careful preparation, but will now have to be dealt with immediately as integral parts of the counter-inflation measures. It will all have to be done quickly. Bernard Shaw said that if Parliament takes 30 years to do a week's work a time would come when it would have to do 30 years' work in a week. The competitive bidding by the political parties to offer ever-larger hand-outs of other people's money will have to come to an end, abruptly and finally. As Evelyn Waugh put it, the corrupt politicians of the 18th century did at least use their own money to bribe the electors.

In this way, and in this way only, we will be able to stop inflation and preserve our free institutions, including Trade Unions. That the *New Statesman* should now be seeing Trade Unions among its principal enemies is comic, but at the same time ominous. It is true that some Trade Unions have been behaving with almost the maximum of irresponsibility. But the institution must be preserved.

THE RIGHT WAY for the State to help the poor is not to attempt to organise services for them, to subsidise this service or that, but to give them enough money to enable them to purchase what they need, through "reverse tax."

Proposals to make money payments calculated simply in terms of a family's low or no income are of course open to the objection that they give the family no incentive to earn, or to conserve their assets; and only heroic virtue—or, (under 19th-century conditions) the threat of the workhouse—will induce them to do so. This was the objection, as historians will point out, to the "Old Poor Law", abolished in 1834, and particularly to its application (in some counties but not in all) in the form of the "Speenhamland Plan", which simply supplemented low wages up to minimum family requirements, thereby taking away the wage earner's incentive to earn more, and also giving employers a pretext for underpaying, and weakening their incentive to introduce the technical improvements which they might have introduced if they had not been able to obtain such cheap labour.

So there must be a "cut-out"—if the family earns an extra pound, its "reverse tax" payment must not be reduced by the whole of this amount. Some preliminary calculations were made on assumptions that the family should be allowed to keep two-thirds or half of any additional income received. Schemes on this basis turned out to be very costly, and to cover an inordinately large number of families. However some recent extensive (and costly) experiments in the United States[1] have led to the unexpectedly favourable result that the incentive to earn is not weakened when the family keeps only one-third of any additional earnings. A workable scheme, at reasonable cost, can be designed on this basis.

THE NEXT QUESTION relates to promptitude of payment. Most Reverse Tax proposals hitherto have implied that it will be paid only after some

[1] See the preliminary report in *Scientific American* (October 1972).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

delay, after inadequacy of income has been proved. This raises many difficulties, especially as families in need often have incomes fluctuating violently from week to week. The proposal is that any family receiving inadequate income, or unable to pay education or health expenses, could make immediate application for a grant of Reverse Tax. Only at the end of the tax year would the family's other income be taken into account. In accordance with this, they might be required to make a partial or complete repayment of the amount of reverse tax which they had received. In the case of family income well above minimum level the applicants would be required to repay the amount received plus a substantial penalty, increasing with income. This is designed to prevent middle—or high—income families "trying their luck" for a free loan.

It is quite clear that assessment of income, and of needs, must be made on a family and not on an individual basis. It is clearly absurd, for instance, for the son of a wealthy family, who earns a few pounds during his summer vacation, to be able to apply to have this sum made up to a minimum income level.

But in any case, for a number of reasons which will be indicated, it will be a desirable reform throughout the tax system, at all income levels, to assess on family, not on individual income. Family incomes will have to be fully aggregated. "Family" will be defined in the first place as spouses and dependent children. Young people over 18 may decide for themselves whether to be assessed with their parents or separately. But reverse tax applications for educational expenses from applicants between the ages of 18 and 25 would only be received from those assessed with their parents.

It should also be permissible to include adult dependents in the family. For many families this would be a substantial advantage in increasing their "divisors" (explained below). This would give a considerable incentive to private care for the aged and infirm. However, any such inclusion of an adult dependent in the family would have to be permanent. That is to say, any subsequent application for reverse tax by such a person would be debited against the family to which he had been previously attached, if that family had previously claimed him as a dependent adult.

The present system of tax allowances for dependent children and adults has been eroded by inflation. In any case it was originally designed mainly for the benefit of low-income tax-payers, making little concession for children at higher income levels. It is unjust that, say, two successful business or professional men, earning the same income, should pay virtually the same tax, when one is single and the other supporting a large family. Tax allowances should be replaced by the French system of "divisors" based on the numbers in the family ("family" as defined above). The divisors would not be the crude numbers in the family. It costs more to provide for four people than for two, but not twice as much. There are certain "indivisibilities" in family expenditure.

The proposed "divisors" are as follows[2]:

| *Number in family* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Divisor* | 1 | 1.70 | 2.13 | 2.49 | 2.84 | 3.19 | 3.58 |

The basis for all taxation and for reverse tax payments will thus be aggregated family income (including any "imputed" income from an owner-occupied dwelling) divided by the divisor for family size. This will be called Income per Unit, and will be the basis for all tax assessments and reverse tax payments and repayments.

THE NEXT REQUIRED CHANGE is the full restoration of what used to be called Schedule A (*i.e.* tax upon owner-occupation of houses.) Whatever were the motives, its abolition has clearly conferred an unjust advantage on those who have bought a house, at the expense of those who pay rent and have invested their capital elsewhere, where the income from it is taxable. The inequity is greatest in the case of those who own and occupy the most expensive houses. It is well-known that much housing is at present under-occupied. This (and other measures proposed below) will create a strong incentive for dwellers in such under-occupied housing to move, or else to let part of their dwellings. The assessment should be based on the estimated gross rent for which the dwelling could be let, less rates, insurance, interest on mortgage, and a tabular allowance for maintenance and depreciation, based on the size and age of the dwelling. This

[2] For families of 2 and upwards, based on expenditures required to maintain welfare equivalence calculated by Seneca and Taussig, *Review of Economics and Statistics* (August 1971); ratio between 1- and 2-person families proposed by Alfred Sauvy, *Richesse et Population* (1943).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assessment should be included in full in taxable income.

Taxation, reverse tax, and other payments will be subject to indexing. (The word "indexation" is an unpardonable offence against the principles of English grammar.) However strong the counter-measures against inflation, there are still many price increases which will have to be worked out of the system. The Government should announce indexing, at six-monthly intervals (in view of the rate of price increase perhaps even at three-monthly intervals), of principal and interest of all forms of Government debt, of tax brackets, and of reverse tax payments. Banks and building societies would have to be subsidised to apply indexing, because they would have to allow it on all deposits (though not on current accounts). It would be impracticable to distinguish between old and new deposit accounts. While receiving indexed revenue from Government bonds, banks and building societies would be contractually bound to existing interest and principal payments on outstanding loans. New loans would be available, at low rates of interest —but the borrowers would be committed to indexed payments of interest and principal.

WITH SO MUCH DEPENDING on the consumer price index, on which all these adjustments will be made, some suspicious minds will fear that the government will be tempted to tinker with the figures. I know this from the other side of the fence, having been an official statistician for many years. Such a danger does still exist, though with the more complex statistical systems now in use tinkering would be more difficult than it was with the simple index numbers of the past. There might be a case, while leaving all other duties of the Central Statistical Office as they are, for placing the responsibility for compiling the consumer price index number on an independent commission staffed by statisticians and economists, with judicial status and powers to collect evidence.

It cannot be too emphatically pointed out however, that indexing is not a cure for inflation. It only mitigates some of the flagrant injustices caused by inflation.

TO RETURN TO reverse tax, applications could be:

1. *Permanent*, on grounds of: Old Age, Infirmity and Invalidity, Widowhood or marital separation with care of young children
2. *Temporary*, on grounds of: Earnings inadequate to support family, loss of earnings through sickness or accident, loss of earnings through unemployment, temporary adverse conditions for personal or family businesses, educational fees, medical expenses for any sickness or accident exceeding £25.

In the two latter cases the reverse tax authorities would make the payments direct to the educational, medical etc. institutions concerned, after certification. Ownership of a dwelling would be reckoned as income, as indicated above. Ownership of other property (as distinct from income from it) would not be taken into account in applications for temporary reverse tax, but holders of such property could not apply for permanent reverse tax.

In a few cases reverse tax payments will have to be made to men in regular work if they are supporting a large family on a low wage. Such cases should however, be uncommon, and not enough to give a general incentive to employers in some industries to underpay—as was the case with the "Speenhamland Plan."

Those capable of work, claiming on grounds of unemployment, would be rejected if they refused work, which was within their capacity, when offered to them. Unavoidably this would require the exercise of considerable discretion on the part of those administering the scheme.

THIS REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT DEPARTURE from the original Reverse Tax proposals of Professor Milton Friedman and others, which did not require a "work test", and might have led to large numbers of able-bodied men living permanently on the Reverse Tax payments—and devoting their energies to asking for more.

To show how reverse tax should be worked (all the figures below are in income-per-unit, *i.e.* family incomes divided by the divisor, or single persons' incomes, we may put the reverse tax payment for a wholly supported person at £750 per year (this and all other figures of course to be indexed upwards as prices continue to rise). If however, he receives enough other income to bring him above £750 he should be required to refund two-thirds of the excess. When, however, family income (other than reverse tax) exceeds £1,000 per unit per year the penalty rate comes into effect. The amount of reverse tax to be refunded is raised by the proportion which such income bears to £1,000. The following table illustrates how these proposals would work.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMOUNTS OF REVERSE TAX REQUIRED TO BE REFUNDED

| *Family income per Unit during past year other than Reverse Tax* | *Reverse Tax received during past year per Unit* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £250 | £500 | £750 |
| £250 | | 0 | 167 |
| £500 | 0 | 167 | 333 |
| £750 | 167 | 333 | 500 |
| £1,000 | 250 | 500 | 667 |
| £1,250 | 312 | 625 | |
| £1,750 | 437 | 875 | |
| £2,000 | 500 | 1,000 | |

These figures relate to a family receiving reverse tax on grounds of poverty alone. In the case of a family which had also received say £250 per unit reverse tax for medical or educational expenses the specified repayments would begin at points £250 higher than those shown. These refunds would be payable in addition to ordinary income tax, which should only be levied on family incomes of £1,000 per unit and upwards.

In the (probably unusual) cases of reverse tax of more than £500 per unit having been received by families whose incomes from other sources proved to have been over £1,000 per unit, in order to avoid excessive marginal rates of tax, the penalty rates would be halved, but would continue for two years.

These penalty rates of repayment should prove sufficient deterrent to applications from families not in real need.

The provision of reverse tax for poor families, income divisors, etc., should be announced, and at the same time large reductions in income tax rates. Some reductions in indirect taxes might also be possible. As indicated above, income taxation should not begin until income per unit reaches £1,000. The maximum rate of income tax should be 50%.

THEN THE BLOW would fall. All Government payments for medicine, and for education above minimum compulsory level, should immediately cease. For the poor, reverse tax payments to cover these expenses could be available.

The banks should make education loans (parents would have to guarantee repayment) to families ineligible for reverse tax. Universities, high schools, hospitals, etc., would have to convert themselves into institutions charging fees to cover the full cost of the services they provide. While teaching costs would have to be fully covered by fees, the universities could continue to receive some grants for research in pure science—applied scientific research should be paid for by industry. There would be a considerable fall in attendance at universities and high schools and some fall in the demand for doctors' and hospitals' services. Some of the worst universities should be closed altogether, and the others would have to effect very large economies.

For primary education, vouchers should be given to a value equal to the estimated average cost of education in a local authority school, which parents could cash at any private school of their choice. This would not be applicable, of course, in rural areas where no choice of primary school is possible. But anything which can be done to promote competition between schools is desirable.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES are responsible for a large amount of public expenditure, much of it desirable, but needing to be deferred in times of inflation.

Local authorities should receive:

1. Rate revenue
2. Motor vehicle taxation
3. Other present minor revenues
4. 20% of the personal (not company) income tax collected from residents in their area (this is intended as a transitional measure until, as in Sweden, Canada, etc., local authorities are empowered to collect local income tax, at rates fixed by them, as percentage supplements to national income tax)
5. Supplementation grants (though not to the full extent of such deficiency) when per head revenue from the above sources falls below the national average
6. Strictly limited loan funds (described below)

Otherwise all government grants and loans to local governments will cease. They can undertake such additional expenditure (current or capital) as their own rate-payers are willing to pay for.

A public authority spending money which has mostly been raised by a different taxing authority never spends it with the same care as it spends money raised by taxing its own electors. The financial autonomy and responsibility of local authorities are among the saddest casualties of recent decades.

Local authorities would be forbidden to undertake a general financing of higher education. It is clearly unjust to ask poorer rate payers to provide for the privileged few destined mostly for prosperous careers. Local authorities, however, could if they wished offer a limited number of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scholarships as rewards for unusual scholastic merit.

Local authorities would be required to sell all houses owned by them, within three years, refunding an appropriate portion of the proceeds to the Central Government. The local authorities' share of the proceeds would have to be banked, and could not be spent immediately.

All rent restriction and security of tenure should be abolished, and "Schedule A" tax imposed upon owner-occupiers. The result would be a fall in the price of houses, and an abundance of accommodation available for renting.

The only qualification should be that low-income families faced with rent demands which they could not meet should be given time to find alternative accommodation by restriction of rent increases (after examination of income and circumstances) to 10% every three months.

As with education, local authorities would be forbidden to pay general subsidies on housing, but could if they wished provide special housing for the aged, infirm, etc. Subsidisation of such ventures by charitable and religious organisations would probably, however, be a better policy.

Nationalised industries should not be permitted to incur losses. The railways should not be regarded as a social service. Most of their losses appear to arise on suburban services, many of which are for the benefit of high-income families. The railways should be required to charge full costs, or to discontinue such services. The principal consequences of this would be a fall in the price of land, both in city centres, and in the suburbs near railway stations.

The amount of borrowing which can be permitted to Local Authorities and nationalised industries will have to be strictly limited. From time to time the Government should announce the total amount of such borrowing which can be permitted, and invite all potential borrowers in these sectors to tender, awarding the loans to those whose needs thus appear most urgent.

THESE PROPOSALS WILL PROBABLY mean some increase in unemployment, though it should not be very great nor last for long, as private demand rises to replace government demand.

Inflation has led to a quite excessive demand for commercial and office buildings. The proposals re rent control, selling of council houses, etc., will cause a fall in the demand for new houses, though this will be partially offset by the need for overtaking the great arrears of maintenance which rent control has caused. Nevertheless there will be some unemployed builders, who should be encouraged to find temporary work in Continental Europe, or even in Australia.

The principal disemployment, however, will be of civil servants and of teachers, who will, of course, fight these proposals every step of the way. Discharges should be on the principle of Last In First Out. The younger men and women can more readily adapt themselves to other employments.

Encouraging early retirement by large "golden hand-shakes" is not a good policy—it would get rid of the best civil servants and keep the worst ones.

THESE PROPOSALS will probably not be adopted. And inflation will continue and accelerate. As with the Sibylline Books of old, the longer the decision is deferred, the higher will be the price which will have to be paid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THEATRE

## Phaedra Victoriana

*By John Weightman*

PHAEDRA BRITANNICA, by Tony Harrison "after" Jean Racine,[1] raises the general question of what the National Theatre is trying to do when it presents us with modern English versions of the French classics. Is the aim to give the English public unacquainted with the great originals some idea of what those works are about, or is it rather to use the recognised masterpieces as starting points for the creation of new works, which have little or nothing to do with the primary texts? This is the eternal dilemma of interlinguistic communication. Should one remain faithful as far as possible to the letter and the spirit of the foreign work, or should one just treat it as an interesting and exotic old ruin from which to steal stones for the building of a new edifice? Both operations are legitimate; the first I would call translation proper, and the second adaptation. Translation proper, however good, is always to some extent a failure, because no two languages can ever be made to fit exactly one over the other. But at least this sort of rendering transmits a proportion of the foreign meaning and allows the reader or spectator to commune with a slightly zombie-like double of the foreign work. Adaptation, on the other hand, can range from the unhappy hybrid, made up of incongruous bits and pieces, to the complete, autonomous success, which embodies a different kind of aesthetic achievement, and may even, in its own way, outshine the original.

Judged in the light of these principles, John Wells' version of *The Marriage of Figaro* was a serviceable translation, and Tony Harrison's previous effort, *The Misanthrope*, an ingenious and largely successful adaptation. Molière's bitter-sweet comedy was transposed from the Paris of Louis XIV to that of De Gaulle in the 1960s, and the joke worked to some extent, because of the *Canard Enchaîné*-like parallel between Le Roi Louis and Le Roi Charles, and the buzz of spiteful gossip on the fringe of each court. Moreover, rhyming couplets in English lend themselves to witticisms and irony. This English *Misanthrope* was not a new independent masterpiece, because the adaptation creaked in places, and besides 17th-century misanthropy could not exist in the same form in 20th-century society, but the play provided excellent entertainment and offered some equivalent of Molière's sardonic sparkle. The cause of intercultural communication was thus usefully served.

PHAEDRA BRITANNICA is a different matter. Racine, adapting Euripides and Seneca, clothed Greek myth in 17th-century French, and he was no doubt expressing 17th-century feelings and ideas, but these are universal enough, and the verse they are embodied in is sublime enough, for the tragic poetry to be meaningful for anyone who has the time and the curiosity to enter into the conventions that are being used. Racine's Phèdre is presented as standing squarely in her native Greek culture, between the upper and the nether worlds, between the deities and mankind, and she partakes both of the human and the divine. The gods are her gods, and although Racine predated sociological theories about religion and was later to retreat to orthodox Catholic piety, here he makes the gods function perfectly as direct projections of human passion. Phèdre sees herself in a cosmic perspective and has a special relationship with the creative, all-seeing eye of the sun. The major polarities in the play are, precisely, the light and the dark, day and night, reason and desire, the pure and the impure, the open and the closed, the said and the unsaid, and they are all operating together to produce the exquisite tension of the poetry, with its unique balance of the barbaric and the precious. It seems to me that Phèdre is still alive everywhere—I imagine I have often seen her face in the Parisian Métro—but she has spoken only once with this central, ceremonious perfection.

Mr Harrison's "bright" idea in transferring the action from Ancient Greece to Victorian

[1] *Phaedra Britannica*. By TONY HARRISON. Rex Collings, £1.25.



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

India breaks the back of the theme irretrievably by destroying the naturalness of the continuity between the human and the divine. His Phaedra is an English Memsahib (although apparently born in India, since her *confidente* is her old ayah), who cannot bear the heat and who attributes her misfortune to the erotic pressure of alien gods. In her, the human/cosmic of the original is reduced, in effect, to the Victorian/colonial. At times, she might almost be paraphrasing the request: "No sex, please, we're British." This produces the inappropriately comic implication that the problem would not exist if the whole company could be translated to the hygienic atmosphere of the home counties. Theseus (the Governor) would presumably ride chastely to hounds and have no harems or zenanas to interfere with, while Phaedra would not be led astray by sinister Indian counsels and would conceive no guilty passion for her stepson. Of course, one could have a play about erotic over-stimulation being part of the white man's burden in the tropics, if indeed it is, but this is not what Racine's *Phèdre* is about; Racine is concerned with universal sex. Nor is it convincingly the subject of Mr Harrison's play. If India is a hot-bed of lust, why are Hippolyte (Thomas Theophilus, the Governor's half-caste son—I cannot see why he is called "Thomas, the god-loving", unless this is a sly dig at his chastity) and Aricie (Lilimani, an Indian Princess) such models of decorum, when, as Indians, they should be even more lecherous than the whites? The answer seems to be, simply, that the original plot is being followed on this point, without the contradiction being noticed or bothered about.

And there are other discrepancies too. The Governor behaves like a local tyrant, an attitude which might have been conceivable in the case of an 18th-century nabob, but would surely have been embarrassing to the central British authorities in the mid-19th century. Besides, how could he disappear for months on end, without the bureaucracy sending in a substitute? His son could not replace him, because posts in the Government of India were not hereditary, and so on. It was an advantage for Racine to place his action, representative of modern psychology, in the elemental setting of mythic Greece, where tyrants were a reality and dynastic conflict an accepted part of politics; this allowed him to express the tensions with stylised simplicity. In any case, dynastic questions were still important in the 17th century, so that he could feel them in his bones, and Louis XIV was not unlike Theseus: a "great" king, who appropriated any woman

*"An extremely important and highly persuasive document on the causes of inflation."*
JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

# THE ROOTS OF INFLATION

## THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

by GARDINER C MEANS and others

★ Destined to be a classic on the subject. Eight internationally known economists present the findings of many years intensive study of the western world's major economies and provide the first truly adequate explanation for simultaneous inflation and recession.

★ "It tells us that traditional economic theory offers cures for every kind of inflation except that caused by the administrative decisions of large institutions and firms. They can only be cured by the Government exercising its political will. But if the Government itself is the prime engine of inflation . . . blooey!"
SUNDAY TIMES

★ "The importance of this book is that these eight economists locate the trouble in the human behaviour of the advanced industrial society. What they find is that the capitalists are not behaving like proper textbook capitalists. Indeed, they aren't proper capitalists at all, they are salaried managers whose motives are not so much to maximise the profits as to run huge organisations according to professional standards of a different kind: Efficiency, stability, design, quality, ordering marketing, and so on." THE GUARDIAN

★ " . . . prices rise not by levitation but by human action—usually action by those who profit from the change . . . " A. E. Kahn in THE ROOTS OF INFLATION.

Now published **£9.00** net

*Send your order with remittance to:*

**WILTON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS**

**40 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.** *Telephone:* 01-834 4846

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who happened to take his fancy. It is impossible to achieve a comparable elemental simplicity in the setting of Imperial India, with all the complexities of delegated authority. Therefore, what is strong and pure in Racine's play becomes muddled in Mr Harrison's version. *Phaedra Britannica* works neither as a translation to convey the essential meaning of the original, nor as an adaptation saying something different in a valid way.

NEVERTHELESS, it is a most interesting, and in many aspects a most talented, failure, which illlustrates once again the enormous difficulty of transferring anything of Racine to a foreign language. The form of French neo-classical tragedy is so stiff, bare and conventional that it admits of hardly any compromise between the masterpiece and the lifeless dud or empty rhetorical exercise. In practice, there is Corneille (in part), Racine (for the greater part), and no one else, although this was the dominant serious genre for a century and a half. The major problem was how to achieve genuine poetic force and psychological density in rhyming couplets subject to strict rules of lexical propriety, which excludes base terms and concrete references. Mr Harrison, since he has set the action in 19th-century India, cannot attempt the neo-classical form of Dryden or Pope. He chooses a more racy Byronic or Audenesque style, and allows himself total anachronistic freedom of vocabulary, so that Hippolyte (Thomas Theophilus) uses the expression "jungle freak", and Théramène (Burleigh) refers to "the storybook stepson/stepmother thing", as if Victorians could speak in the idiom of the 1970s. The result is sometimes highly successful in its own way, and sometimes surprisingly forced and bathetic—e.g. "Her nerves seem whittled down to fiddle-strings" (anyone with nerves as thick as fiddle strings would be doing quite well)—as if Mr Harrison had not had time to weed out all the blemishes from the text. But even when his verse is good, which is quite frequently, it can give no idea of the transparent, generalised delicacy of the French, which is what Racine is famous for.

I SHALL GIVE only one example. Phèdre's first appearance, one of the greatest entrances in all literature, is marked by two short and perfect speeches, in which the breathings are regulated with the most meticulous and heart-rending good taste:

*N'allons point plus avant. Demeurons, chère Oenone.*
*Je ne me soutiens plus, ma force m'abandonne.*
*Mes yeux sont éblouis du jour que je revois,*
*Et mes genoux tremblants se dérobent sous moi.*
*Hélas!*

*Que ces vains ornements, que ces voiles me pèsent!*
*Quelle importune main, en formant tous ces noeuds,*
*A pris soin sur mon front d'assembler mes cheveux?*
*Tout m'afflige et me nuit, et conspire à me nuire.*

In English these become:

*. . . no more, I can't. Must stop*
*No strength! Can't move another step.*
*Dazzled. My eyes. O ayah, I can't bear*
*The sudden brightness. Sun. Light. Glare.*
*Can't, ayah, can't bear the light. The heat.*
*I don't seem to be able to stand on my feet.*
*aaaggghhh . . . .*

*These stifling rags! Give me air!*
*My hair piled up? wound round? And who did that,*
*Cumbered my reason with a lumpish plait?*
*It weighs like a stone. What meddling little maid*
*Burdened my leaden brain with this huge braid?*
*Aah all things weary me, and make me vexed!*

A resourceful rendering, with some lapses and some good points—I particularly like: "Cumbered my reason with a lumpish plait"—but it is obviously without the economy and regal distinction of the original, and therefore does not help the English actress to strike the note of realistic sublimity, characteristic of the French.

LET ME ADD that, in spite of these criticisms, I found the performance fascinating from beginning to end. Diana Rigg is a true *tragédienne*, whose slightly husky, contralto voice exactly fits the part, and she managed one or two quite splendid shouts. I kept wondering anxiously what would happen when we got to the *récit de Théramène*. Would the monster emerge in all its baroque, Freudian enormity as an appalling exhibitionist erection, indicative of destructive lust? By Jove, Neptune, or Siva, it did!

*Scaled like a golden python, half gross worm,*
*Half unclassifiable pachyderm. . . .*

and Robert Eddison rolled out the lines with relish, making this one of the best moments of the play.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Give thought to your friends

## and save 25% into the bargain!

Yes, a year's subscription to ENCOUNTER is the perfect, thoughtful answer to your Christmas gift problem. Not only do you give your friends twelve months of solid intellectual pleasure, but you save yourself a host of chores—crowded shopping, parcel-packing and posting. Once you have sent us your order, we look after everything, including a gift announcement card and the cost of postage to wherever your friends may be . . . What is more, our special rates for these Christmas gifts save you 25% or more of the usual price! All we ask is that you do not include friends who, as far as you know, are already buying ENCOUNTER regularly. And please note that these reduced rates are not intended for the renewal of previous gifts or for your own subscription. You will find an order form overleaf. It will help us greatly to have your instructions well before Christmas.

**This offer closes on 14th January, 1976**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CHRISTMAS GIFT ORDER FORM

## REDUCED RATES FOR NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS

Gift subscriptions will start with the January 1976 issue, posted shortly before Christmas. Time permitting, a specially designed card announcing your gift will reach the recipient by Christmas Day. This special offer, which is not intended for your own subscription or the renewal of previous gifts, closes on January 14th, 1976.

**YOUR NAME** **My name and address are as follows:**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

**YOUR GIFTS** **Please enter Christmas gift subscriptions for the following:**
BLOCK LETTERS THROUGHOUT PLEASE

Name ..... Name .....

Address ..... Address .....

..... .....

..... .....

Sign Gift Card from..... Sign Gift Card from.....

Name ..... Name .....

Address ..... Address .....

..... .....

..... .....

Sign Gift Card from..... Sign Gift Card from.....

Extra gifts can be ordered on a separate sheet of paper

**PAYMENT** **Enclose payment with this form** **DEC.**

The cost of each subscription is £4 or $10.00. Dollar cheques, sterling cheques and postal orders can be accepted; if you can only pay separately by money order or bank transfer, please give details of the arrangements you have made. A receipt will not be sent unless requested.

**Encounter: 59 St. Martin's Lane, London WC2, England**
**and Box 2665, Boulder, Colorado 80301, USA**

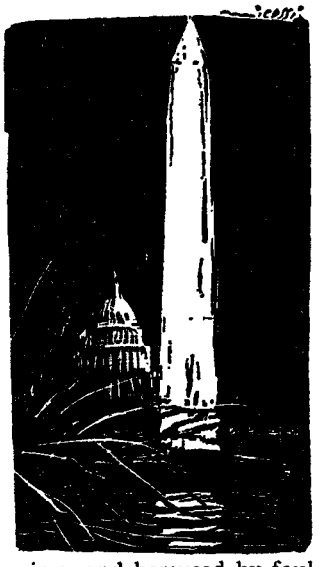
To avoid damaging your magazine cut out along this line

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## AMERICAN CHRONICLE

# Bicentennial Blues

***By Stephen Miller***



ITS HOUR COME round at last, the ungainly beast called the Bicentennial slouches towards Washington to be born. To be precise, it has been born, though it is not yet 1976, having come into the world last spring at a distinctly inappropriate time—the country preoccupied by its defeat in Viet Nam, distracted by inflation, unployment, and crime, and bemused by foul play in the C.I.A., the F.B.I., and the I.R.S. (the tax-collectors). Amid the noise of claims and counterclaims generated by such turmoil, the Bicentennial has had a difficult time making itself heard. In any case, it plans to be around for a year, reaching maturity during the summer of 1976, when hordes of celebrants are expected to descend upon Washington, Philadelphia, and Boston.

Some signs and wonders of this Second Coming: the *Washington Post* has an ad for a "First Bicentennial Bell", a limited edition that costs twenty-five dollars, and one also for a "Bicentennial Medal", also twenty-five dollars, that "bears thirty magnificently sculptured portraits of famous Americans." The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces a "*Bicentennial Parade of American Music*", featuring music from the state of Massachusetts, and the State Department says that it will soon be issuing a Bicentennial Passport, its inside pages containing "a red, white and blue Liberty Bell pattern overprint."

Such hucksterism and hoopla are easy to deride, and no doubt by the end of 1976 every disaffected intellectual will have complacently uttered Samuel Johnson's dictum that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel", unaware that Johnson was referring to a particularly unscrupulous faction of Whigs called the Patriots, whose noisy protestations of high-minded principles he intensely disliked. Yet, surprisingly, such disenchantment or, rather, condescension is not limited to intellectuals or, say, to snidely urbane Easterners; it is pervasive. Notwithstanding the medals, the passports, and the musical fêtes, never did the country seem less eager to indulge in a celebration. Though there must surely be a band of hearty Texans whooping it up for the good old U.S.A., the Bicentennial seems something of a national embarrassment—something that, if it is to be endured at all, must be endured solemnly as a time for national introspection. As *Time* magazine piously intoned in the preface to its Special 1776 Issue, published last July:

> At a time when Americans are questioning the very meaning of their nation's basic beliefs, it is refreshing and reassuring to return to our origins, to our fundamental values. . . .

Just how this exploration will turn out to be "refreshing and reassuring" is not clear.

To emphasise further the seriousness of the whole enterprise, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, the group that is orchestrating the affair, has joined with the National Endowment for the Humanities to set up what is called "The American Issues Forum." The brainchild of Walter Cronkite, a well-known television newscaster, the Forum is a calendar of topics designed to cover all aspects of the American experience. According to the news release, it is supposed to "engage the participation of all Americans, adults and children, in a serious exploration of some of the issues and forces fundamental to our society." Or as Cronkite himself said: "I hope all of us will use the Calendar to examine these issues which can help us to understand who we are, so that we may look more clearly at what we should be as a people and a nation."

In some ways the Forum is an impressive undertaking. The topics were chosen by a panel headed by Daniel Aaron, a professor of English at Harvard. And the accompanying reading list was prepared by, among others, Daniel Bell, Ralph Ellison, Erik Erikson, Hans Morgenthau, and David Riesman. (The list is uneven, including such clinkers as *The Greening of America* and *The Teachings of Don Juan*, and lacking anything by Hawthorne, Melville, Henry Adams or Faulkner, or anything by American poets or philosophers, who were all sacrificed, I suppose,



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to what the introductory material claims the selected books have: readability. Nevertheless, it does contain quite a few respectable works of literature and historical analysis.) Broken down into nine major topics and 36 subtopics, the Forum, which began in September, will last for nine months. It is hoped that organisations and community groups will arrange programmes that centre on these topics. In addition, there will be essays in newspapers, special series on radio and television, and something called "Bicentennial Youth Debates."

ONE'S INITIAL RESPONSE to all this is a certain amount of awe and wonder. A strange country, this United States—a country whose government actually gives money to support programmes in which its citizens are supposed to examine the basic mechanisms that make the whole thing work. The gesture is surely quixotic in its expectation that people will be especially interested in such a national consciousness-raising (to use a term much in vogue at present). It is quixotic, moreover, in its assumption that such an examination is all to the good—that somehow, as Cronkite suggested, it will really enable Americans to understand Who They Are. Can the quasi-myths that support a nation's socio-political order withstand such a scrutiny? One recalls Burke's admonition that the social order is maintained not because people understand how it works but because they unthinkingly accept traditional beliefs, rights, and obligations. Or, as Walter Bagehot put it: "The most essential mental quality for a free people whose liberty is to be progressive, permanent, and on a large scale, is much stupidity."

Yet some may say that Burke and Bagehot serve up a cynical Old-World wisdom, which doesn't apply to this brave new one. At least since the last 100-year celebration American businessmen, politicians, scholars, poets, and novelists have been declaring that the United States cannot be construed in European terms. Perhaps. But as Denis Donoghue suggested in a recent issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*, there is something insidious about the notion that "the American experience is exceptional if not unique"—a notion, Donoghue adds, that is pervasive in the field of American Studies. Is the Forum, then, an American Studies programme writ large, a way of underlining the Americanness of America? No matter that the Forum is designed to avoid a genial pat on America's back, no matter that the Forum's reading list leans heavily towards the dark side of American life: its exclusive focus on the American experience is another sign of the country's intense—one might say hysterical—self-consciousness.

Looked at in this way, Cronkite's rhetoric about learning "who we are" becomes ominous, a symptom of the current American sickness—the country acting like someone in the throes of a nervous breakdown, continually turning inward to try to find out why things are falling apart. For example, *Commentary* recently devoted an entire issue to the question, "AMERICA NOW: A FAILURE OF NERVE?" And *Time* recently ran a long piece, which it featured as its cover story, entitled "Can Capitalism Survive?" One need only look at one week's worth of the *New York Times'* Op-Ed page and the *Washington Post's* editorial page to see that such portentous ways of dealing with America are the order of the day.

If many Americans think that things are falling apart, then the attempt to collectively sift the American experience may only accentuate that feeling of collapse, may only make painfully clear how far the country has drifted from its beginnings. Moreover, the effort may exacerbate the divisiveness and social irritability that have become endemic in American life. (I listened the other day to someone's diatribe against the Forum itself, the woman complaining that the topics had slighted women, Chicanos, and Native Americans.) Even if one applauds this "national dialogue" as a sign of the government's brave and generous faith in the sweet reasonableness of its citizens, one wonders how it can take place in the current atmosphere of bitterness and mistrust. The end result may be neither refreshing nor reassuring but may only lead to an increased supply of indignant desert birds reeling around the Beast as they clamour for their rights.

Unfortunately not only are more and more Americans making claims—indeed demands—upon a bloated, defensive, and vacillating government, a government given to tergiversation because it doesn't really know what to do, but the *same Americans* are regarding the government with total cynicism. They want more and more from a government they believe in less and less. The latter tendency is, I think, partly due to the tremendous power and prestige of the press.

Of course it is foolhardy to attack the press, since the chief attackers in the recent past were Spiro Agnew, who turned out to be a crook, and the hired hands of the Nixon administration. The press is the hero of Watergate—and well it should be. Nevertheless, the fact that all honour and prestige accrue to the press nowadays, and the fact that a journalist may, if he uncovers a scandal in the government, become both famous and rich, make for a peculiar and potentially difficult situation, a situation in which government officials will be very tempted to join the other side and become journalists.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, someone holding an important position in the government. He has some say in the making of policy, but not very much. Yet he must of course carry out the policy decided upon by his superiors, whatever his private thoughts on the matter, and he must of course be defensive and disingenuous with the press. He suffers, then, from certain pressures and tensions that journalists never feel. In the past one reason why those in the upper echelons of power were held back from, as they say, kissing and telling was that they would most obviously be out of a job and would have, probably, a hard time finding another one. Now, however, if such an official joins the other side the rewards may be great. He may become an admired author whom the public lionises because he has let his conscience be his guide. And his book may become a bestseller, with the attendant movie rights, television interviews, offers of jobs with Foundations, Universities, Institutes of policy studies, etc. And if his former colleagues despise him for betraying their trust, he may say to himself that they are probably envious of his fame.

During the past few years the country has been treated to a spate of books by inside dopesters who have related all they knew about the inner workings of government. Just as there was many a soldier during World War II who hoped that he would redeem his agonising experience by writing the great American war novel, so now, perhaps, there are many toiling in government offices who dream of writing the great American exposé, revealing all they know about the Pentagon, the Senate, or—God save us—the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

But I don't want to dwell on the motives of such men, since many of them may be honourable souls who, finally, were appalled by what they had to consent to. And there is no point in castigating the press for doing the job it is supposed to do. Yet even if one acknowledges, as I do, that there has been too much secrecy in government and that some things the government has done deserve to see the light of day, one wonders how a government can function in a climate where officials fear that everything discussed and suggested may soon become public knowledge.

SUCH, I'M AFRAID, is the political climate in which the Bicentennial is supposed to flourish—a state of affairs that has made the public so accustomed to revelations of sinister doings that it greets each newly-minted scandal with a touch of *Schadenfreude:* "Of course. I told you so. What else can you expect from such people?" Cynicism explains all.

**The IEA's attack on**

**INFLATION**

is from first principles;
with the help of

**MILTON FRIEDMAN**

**'The Counter-Revolution in Monetary Theory'**
(Occasional Paper 33, 50p)

**'Monetary Correction'**
(Occasional Paper 41, 60p)

and

**F. A. HAYEK**

**'A Tiger By The Tail'**
(Hobart Paperback 4, £1.00)

**'Full Employment At Any Price?'**
(Occasional Paper 45, £1.00)

and

**COLIN CLARK**

**'Taxmanship'**
(Hobart Paper 26, 40p)

All obtainable from leading booksellers or

**The Institute of Economic Affairs**
**2 Lord North Street**
**Westminster, London SW1**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A certain amount of scepticism towards the political realm is necessary, but total cynicism may well be destructive to the operations of a free society. Aside from its intellectual laziness, its failure to make distinctions, cynicism is a way of dismissing all serious debate about the merits of particular policies and concentrating instead on the supposed motives of those doing the debating. If serious questions of policy are reduced to insidious speculations about motives, then cynicism, which prides itself on its stoic detachment from the grubby things of this world, could easily degenerate into paranoia, especially when people are not really as cynical as they pretend to be—that is, they are cynical only about the motives of those who support policies they dislike.

Thus as this Second Coming becomes a reality we find a society where the best and the worst are full of conviction about the rightness of their demands yet at the same time are cynical about those to whom they direct their demands. Though some demands are in the right, and though some things done under the banner of government have been unconscionable, the convergence of the above tendencies could heat the American pot to the boiling point.

Yet these speculations may themselves be overheated, the effect of reading the exertions of writers who make their living divining the current of American life. A lengthy submersion in the waters of *Time*, the *New York Times*, *Commentary*, the *Washington Post*, and the American Issues Forum may, in fact, make one provincial, may remove one from the concerns of that other America variously labelled the Masses, the Silent Majority, or—simply—the People. It may be that Americans are less exercised about politics than one thinks; it may be that they are, by and large, less cynical than apathetic or, frankly, bored. Books about the machinations of government are, I think, in the main read by those who exist in the government or on the margins of government. The rest of the country seems to prefer livelier and simpler entertainment—*Jaws*, for example, a novel about a shark and several unwary swimmers, a novel that has become a bestseller and an extraordinarily profitable movie. For most Americans scare stories about sharks may be more compelling than scandals about the C.I.A.

Moreover the country is in the midst of a serious recession or a mild depression—call it what you will—and most Americans are probably more concerned with getting and spending than with deep thoughts about whether capitalism can survive or whether America is suffering a failure of nerve. They are fumbling in the greasy till and adding the half-pence to the pence, their worries strictly economic rather than vaguely political. Though Yeats, whose language I've appropriated here, found nothing to say in favour of greed, Paul Freund (the noted legal scholar who recently gave the annual Jefferson Lecture of the National Endowment for the Humanities) once called greed and hypocrisy "two of the great civilising human traits", explaining that "hypocrisy is a bridge thrown up between attitude and behaviour [and] greed is a response to the equalising power of money." A society preoccupied not, perhaps, with greed but with making ends meet will have very little time for the Bicentennial, but it will also have no interest in becoming so passionately intense about politics that things indeed will fall apart.

## Coming Back

I forget the sea, passing the first
lighthouse after a voyage.
I drive home through forests,
darkness rising between pines.
Everything folds up for the night,

already friends and places half
way into memories.
The forest goes on growing in the dark
where I lie thinking of the slow rings
behind me, around me, before me.

*Robin Fulton*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NOTES & TOPICS

## European Notebook

# Arguing about Fascism

### *By François Bondy*

Is Fascism still fascinating? The historical phenomenon of 20th-century Europe appears, if one overlooks its rhetorical uses in propaganda battles, to have faded—except in the place of its origin, Italy. In Germany they would seem to have "mastered the past", and even the recent so-called "*Hitler-Welle*" of biographies and memoirs is approaching an end. In France the era of the Nazi Occupation and the Vichy régime is taken to be "so long ago" that even the national celebration of Victory days is being abandoned. But in Italy there was neither a popular resistance movement nor a Nuremberg Trial of war criminals nor an Anglo-American "Re-education" programme. What happened in the two decades of Italian history under Benito Mussolini still needs to be confronted, considered, criticised.

The first controversial step in this direction has now been taken by an historian of the younger generation which, neither pro- nor anti-fascist, is simply post-fascist. Renzo de Felice is 46, but he is not without personal commitment as his first book, *A History of the Italian Jews under Fascism*, testified. He went on to produce a four-volume biography of Mussolini, and it has already gone into several editions, with much attention in the specialist historical journals. Renzo de Felice has now been interviewed at length by an American historian, and the slim book just published by Benedetto Croce's old house, Laterza in Bari,[1] has provoked a nation-wide storm of controversy and debate.

Here is no conventional repetition of the old well-worn theses about fascism, totalitarianism, late capitalism, charismatic leadership, and the like. This act of revisionism has proved to be a little too much for Italy's ideologised intellectuals. A massive counter-attack has developed, and De Felice's friends have even been talking of a "witch-hunt." Nearly everybody I spoke to about it is either passionately For or Against. Perhaps his most daring piece of research was to actually try and locate the survivors of the Mussolini régime and gather their testimony; and only Federzoni, the ideologue of strict nationalism, refused to be interviewed. Not that he has published any of this material, but obviously the "personal" insight into motives and characters has been helpful to "understand" history rather than simply to sit in judgment on it.

De Felice's historical approach is to make certain important distinctions—for example, between the Movement, the Party, and the Régime, with Mussolini's person supplying the only connection. Here he sees the Duce as a "revolutionary" figure. This is, of course, explosive stuff in contemporary Italian politics where Revolution means Left and the Right stands only for Reaction. But De Felice argues that it was indeed a revolutionary factor in Italian society to recruit new popular elements and classes—the "masses", if you will—into participation in the political process. One notes that Aldo Garosci, the respected anti-Fascist and historian, recently ascribed the high participation of the voters in national elections (90%) to the lasting influence of the earlier "activisation."

More than that, De Felice argues that the Fascist Revolution did manage to win a popular consensus: Mussolini, until the last disastrous period of World War II, enjoyed the support of a majority, sometimes silent, often acclamatory, but not simply a popularity based on force and manipulation. One of the volumes of the work on Mussolini is called "The Years of Consensus." De Felice, accordingly, places emphasis on the peaceful pro-Western foreign policies of the régime until at least 1934; and he doesn't believe the later involvement in aggressive war to have been "inevitable", or "in the logic of events." It was Mussolini, at a time when the Western powers showed no interest in what was happening, who mobilised troops on the Austrian border to warn Hitler. Here, as in many other places, De Felice sharpens his pencil point until it almost breaks. The war of conquest in Abyssinia, the demands for Corsica and Nice—these surely were not pieces of rhetoric, but like the invocations of the heritage of ancient Rome were part and parcel of an expansionism which expressed itself in the Fascist cult of War, an "ideological twist" which had historic consequences.

The "ideological twist" which De Felice does emphasise, even to heretical proportions, is the Cult of Youth. The addiction to youthfulness, he

[1] Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul Fascismo* (ed. Michael A. Ledeen), published by Laterza (Bari, 1975).



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

holds, was real and deep; and in point of fact Mussolini allowed a little more freedom to the youth movements (and their periodical publications) than was his wont. This is arguable. But the thesis which has caused the most controversy—involving all the major newspapers of Italy, as well as radio and television broadcasts—was his insistence on the singularity, the uniqueness of Fascism, and the worthlessness of the comparisons so often made to other "Right-wing" movements, from the Rumanian Iron Cross to the Juntas in Greece. Here the polemic is with the classic presentation of Ernst Nolte in his book *Three Faces of Fascism* (1965). Others have gone on to use "Fascism" as a catch-all, and De Felice seems to be curiously keen not to give up Italian specificity.

Historians, especially German ones, will be surprised by this claim of national exceptionalism, and it is more forcefully than persuasively argued. Italian Fascism was Left, German National-Socialism was Right. Mussolini never forgot his experiences as a socialist, continued to believe in a "progressive future", while Hitler remained untouched by such sentiments and was bound by past traditions. De Felice even contends that only Mussolini had the true charismatic style as leader, and suggests that Hitler thought of himself as dispensable. If there was an identity between the two dictators it was in what they rejected, not what they shared. The Fascist and the Nazi were two quite different species of political animal.

Needless to say, the usual view of historians has been the very opposite. Where but in Italy were the traditional institutions, like the Papacy and the Monarchy, powerful and influential, and ready to play a role when the Fascist régime began to disintegrate? Who was really more "independent of the past", the relatively conservative Mussolini or the radical Hitler? Like all strong-minded historians offering a simplistic interpretation, De Felice picks and chooses among the available facts, often ignoring the obvious ones and not even attempting to explain them away. For him Fascism is revolutionary because it transformed the old political structure by bringing a new class into the social struggle for power. This was, he claims, a specifically Italian phenomenon.

THERE HAVE, of course, been critics galore. Not a few have spoken in terms of a "stab-in-the-back" to anti-Fascism. Rather more calm was the evaluation in the *Corriere della Sera* by Leo Valiani, an historian of the older generation. Valiani was in Mussolini's prisons for some ten years and in fact was, after 1943, a leader of the "military underground" in Northern Italy; his work on the Habsburg monarchy is widely respected. The differences between Nazism and Fascism, according to Valiani, are not greater or different in substance than the differences between Germany and Italy. Valiani does not subscribe to the notion that Italy was "youthful"and "optimistic" and Germany merely lost in visions of a *Götterdämmering* and an *Untergang*. Who after all had a *Kraft-durch-Freude* movement, proclaiming strength through joy? Indeed the De Felice theses could be stood on their head, and have in fact already been. In Ralf Dahrendorf's well-known work on German politics,[2] it is Nazism which is seen as a truly revolutionary force, if an unwitting destroyer of old social forces and attitudes, and thus a preparatory stage for Germany's subsequent post-War democracy.

The most formidable defence of De Felice came from Rosario Romeo, an historian of high repute, writing in the *Nuovo Giornale*, and troubled by the "hysterical" and "denunciatory" character of the national debate. He disagreed with many of the contentions, but felt no serious historical interpretation should be placed beyond the pale of intellectual discussion. One leading

[2] See Ralf Dahrendorf, "The New Germanies: Restoration, Revolution, Reconstruction", ENCOUNTER, April 1964.

**Arts Council Poetry Library**

**105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU**

*Tel:* 01-629 9495

*Membership is free* *Open to the Public*

A collection of modern poetry covering the period from 1930 to the present. Mainly English poetry, but poetry in English from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Australia, Canada, U.S.A., West Indies, and translated European and Latin American poetry are all well represented.

Books are available for reference and loan. A catalogue of books in stock is available free on request.

*Hours:* 10 a.m. to 12.30—1.30 to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Thursday late night opening until 7 p.m.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist—possibly in the general mood of making historic compromises—even tried to mediate between the polemical camps. Giorgio Amendola, the son of a liberal politician who was murdered by the fascists, insisted in an article in *Unità* that Fascism was not simply a matter for outrage and indignation, that it had to be comprehended, indeed, "integrated" into the course of Italian history. It is not enough to trace only "the thin line of erstwhile anti-fascist resistance." He uses, however, this argument to play down non-Communist anti-fascism. There was, according to Amendola, a "Left" element in the early rallying of the Fascist movement (here he is only following Togliatti's *Lezioni sul Fascismo*); and there were many, like the Communist Delio Cantimori, who in fact thought they saw in it a hopeful revolutionary future for Europe and, like Ingrao, today a gray eminence in the Party, who were active in Mussolini's student movements and felt themselves to be "progressive" rather than "reactionary." Surely this is tricky and dangerous ground for ideological forays, in view of the old Jürgen Habermas formula of "Left Fascism." If fascists turn out to be communists, may not communists mutate into fascists (in Portugal Cunhal is in fact being denounced on the Left as a "fascist" in method and principle)? In an exchange (in the weekly *Espresso*) with Leo Valiani, Amendola amplified the sense in which anti-fascism was "too thin a thread." Only the Communist party—he contended—had a clear policy while all other anti-fascist movements were utterly confused and grievously mistaken. Suddenly the argument about fascism and anti-fascism took on a different aspect. The apparent liberalism of Amendola's defence of De Felice had a very different meaning and motive: the desire to diminish the political and ideological role of the non-Communist anti-fascists.

As for De Felice in this whole altercation, he notes with a melancholy tone that "among the worst evils which Italy has inherited from the Fascist epoch is the heritage of intolerance—the anti-fascists have taken it over, nationalising the habit of discrediting and destroying one's opponents. . . ."

Why is it that only now in Italy, "thirty years after", has such a controversy broken out?

There are, to be sure, Neo-Fascists on the Italian scene; but the chances of their seizing any kind of power for themselves is just about nil, although the Left (and especially the Far Left) is constantly shouting about the imminent dangers. Thus De Felice's approach, which is that of an historian who thinks of the phenomenon he is dissecting as a thing of the past that can be looked at objectively, is a kind of ideological provocation. To be sure, there are "dangers" on both Left and Right, and both have been involved in the wave of terroristic violence which has swept Italy in recent years: "*trame nere*" and "*trame rosse*", conspiracies both red and black. But politicians and even judges in Italy have a keen nose for the way the wind is blowing, and the tendency is to deal with Left violence most circumspectly. The ideological atmosphere suggests that "only from the Right" can come threats to the democratic social order. The mantle of Anti-Fascism thus offers a protective coat for all the elements on the so-called Left who are operating extra-legally. How disturbing, then, to hear it argued by Renzo de Felice that the total simple-mindedness of "anti-fascist" articles of faith has nothing to do with understanding the past or effectively dealing with the present. (Here is a break with Italy's grand rhetorical traditions in politics.)

SOME FIFTY YEARS AGO there used to be an angry cry, "*Ha detto male di Garibaldi!*", for even to seem to speak ill about Garibaldi was tantamount to sacrilege. Italian political life has always had its secular saints. Now the idea has been put about that Renzo de Felice has spoken well of Mussolini (which he hasn't), and this too is to be reckoned among the sinful perfidies.

Still, it remains something of a paradox *all' italiana* that an historian who thought he could put some distance between the past and the present should have been so passionately caught up in the current twists and turns of political life here. To try to revise an interpretation of bygone events is obviously to be a "revisionist", a dangerous thing in a world of embattled orthodoxies. Perhaps someone at Laterza in Bari should have reminded Renzo de Felice of Benedetto Croce's old dictum that all history is contemporary history.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Unpicking the Pattern

## *D. H. Lawrence & Biography—By* ROBERT GITTINGS

THE BIOGRAPHER of a writer has one set of difficulties which the biographer of any other professional person is spared. Even if a writer has not directly and openly written his own autobiography, he has probably done so indirectly in his plays, novels, poems, or whatever forms of literary expression he has used. The literary biographer is at once faced with the problem of this material. In writing the biography of, say, an engineer, one does not have to decide whether the Clifton Suspension Bridge is fictional, only part-fictional, or true. It exists as a fact in itself; while a general who gives a fictional account of his battle is soon found out by history.

There is, of course, a school of criticism which maintains that a writer's works *do* exist as facts in themselves, and that the biographer has no need to meddle with them. This is a further discouragement to the literary biographer, the dismissal of his work as irrelevant and unnecessary. We have the "Ode to a Nightingale"; why do we want to know about Keats as a person? Isn't *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* enough, without dragging in the marital troubles Hardy was experiencing while composing it? Sooner or later, and generally sooner, when he has accepted his first flattering invitation to address a university or college audience, the literary biographer is challenged with this sort of aggressive question: was his journey of research and laborious fact-finding, on which he spent the awards and grants he was generously given, at all necessary?

From a prejudiced point of view, I naturally maintain that it was: that in literature, as in any other profession, it may be important and illuminating to relate the life and the work. In doing this, of course, one is frequently misunderstood. To give a personal instance, I once spent a good deal of time, trouble, and, as I had hoped, well-placed ingenuity, discovering what Hardy's fine poem "During Wind and Rain" was actually describing. Critics had expatiated on its symbolism of change and decay, displayed in telling and well-chosen images, "How the sick leaves reel down in throngs", and how "the rotten rose is ript from the wall" and so on. Yet why did Hardy include other images, some prosaic and even commonplace, which surely could not be treated on a symbolic level, like the "pet fowl" which came "to the knee", the "Clocks and carpets and chairs/On the lawn all day"? All these I found mentioned practically word for word in his dead wife's manuscript reminiscences of her own family homes. Hardy, as so often in his poems of self-torturing remorse, was contrasting his wife's happy childhood with the later decay and sadness of their own married life. It showed, I thought, too, how words carelessly written by another person could become key-phrases in a highly-organised poem. The comment, however, of a critic whom I highly respect was that "As usual, these correspondences are interesting rather than essential", and that a certain "brilliant critical commentary on the poem is none the less illuminating for mentioning none of them." So much for the hard-won "discoveries" of the literary biographer.

THESE REFLECTIONS on the perils and problems of literary biographers are partly aroused by the arrival of Philip Callow's biography of the young D. H. Lawrence,[1] together with the autobiographical study by one of Lawrence's friends, Helen Corke, of her own first 30 years, including her friendship with Lawrence.[2] Quite apart from the obvious likenesses, which have often been pointed out, the problems in a literary biography of the young Lawrence resemble those with the young Hardy. Both men left a mass of writing about their early years, which can partly be taken as autobiography. In some ways they are startlingly similar in their

[1] *Son and Lover: The Young Lawrence.* By PHILIP CALLOW. Bodley Head, £6.00.

[2] *In our Infancy: An Autobiography. Part 1, 1882–1912.* By HELEN CORKE. Cambridge University Press, £4.90.



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

treatment of facts. Both were mother-fixated, and both exalt their mothers to some extent at the expense of their fathers. It appears from Callow's biography that there was not nearly as much class difference between Lawrence's parents as he himself, in *Sons and Lovers*, would suggest. Their grandfathers were socially alike, a tailor and a failed silk-manufacturer, and there was even an earlier marriage between members of the two families. These facts hardly fit the rough miner and refined lady schoolteacher of *Sons and Lovers*. Similarly, Hardy juggled historical fact even more curiously in the mother-worship of his own autobiographical writing. Dwelling on his own mother's "educated" mother, "who owned a stock of books of exceptional extent", he conceals the fact that his mother, like all her brothers and sisters, was brought up on parish charity, and herself went into domestic service at an early age. This need to build up his mother led Hardy also to belittle his father, for whom, paradoxically, he had great respect. He portrays him as casual and unsuccessful in his business of stonemason: the truth, easily found in 19th-century census returns, is that Hardy senior, starting from virtually nothing, created one of the most successful and profitable building businesses in the Dorchester area.

What trust, then, can the biographer of a literary figure place in the literary creations which purport to give the facts of the subject's life—for though Hardy, unlike Lawrence, at times strenously denied autobiography in his novels, he also at times admitted it. Every artist who is worth anything transmutes, selects, arranges; a painter's composition may be based on a landscape, but it is seldom the exact topography that he actually could see. So with a novelist or indeed any creative writer. What Keats called "the innumerable compositions and decompositions which take place between the intellect and its thousand materials" is alone certain to shift the fiction, sometimes by imperceptible steps, further and further away from original fact. Sometimes a writer even recreates while in the act of observing. This is always certain when we have actual evidence of deliberate literary revision. We know that Lawrence, prompted and guided by Edward Garnett, and caustically criticised by Frieda, virtually rewrote and reconstituted *Sons and Lovers* from beginning to end in the same way that Hardy revised much of *Far From the Madding Crowd* under the expert editorial tuition of Leslie Stephen. Those who try to import the exact situation of *Sons and Lovers* into Lawrence's own life-story should heed this admirable note, accompanying portraits of Mrs Lawrence and Jessie Chambers, in the catalogue of the 1972 Nottingham Festival

**Socialist Ownership and Political Systems Under Socialism**

WLODZIMIERZ BRUS

The distinguished Polish economist investigates the interrelations between economic and political factors under socialism. His compelling controversial book demonstrates the value of analytical tools in uncovering the internal contradictions in socialism. £6.50

**Implicit Meanings**

**Essays in Anthropology**

MARY DOUGLAS

Dr Douglas has long enjoyed a reputation as a writer concerned with the significance of meaning, ritual and symbolism in everyday life and not only with things narrowly anthropological. This book presents a unique and exciting view of the unity and importance of her studies. There is an extensive preface and an introduction to each section, newly written to integrate this seminal work.

*Illustrated* £7.50

**Practical Social Sciences**

ADAM PODGÓRECKI

Can the social sciences have strong practical applications? This inquiry into the special nature of practical social science is of particular interest in that it is written by a leading sociologist in Poland, where the organization of the social sciences is clearly related to their possibilities for application. *International Library of Sociology* £4.50

**Routledge & Kegan Paul**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**- Poetry -**

**Kenneth Allott**
**COLLECTED POEMS**
*Introduction by Roy Fuller*
**£2.90**

**Alan Brownjohn**
**A SONG OF GOOD LIFE**
*Poetry Book Society Recommendation* for Autumn 1975
**£2.90**

**Edwin Brock**
**THE BLOCKED HEART**
A fresh collection by the author of **The Portraits & The Poses.**
**£2.90**

**John Fuller**
**THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SEA**
By the author of **Cannibals and Missionaries** and **Epistles to Several Persons** for which he won the *Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize* in 1974.
**£2.40**

**William Peskett**
**THE NIGHTOWL'S DISSECTION**
**£2.90**

**Secker & Warburg**


Exhibition of the early years of D. H. Lawrence.

> His mother and his great friend at the Haggs [Jessie Chambers] remained at this time the dominant female influences in Lawrence's life. Though the settings in which he knew them—a collier's home and a farmer's home—differed, scholars have perhaps put too much emphasis upon the possessiveness, sometimes the jealousy, of each, and take too closely the fictional Paul Morel for the actual Lawrence.

THIS IS THE BIOGRAPHICAL danger, of which Philip Callow seems only partly aware, in using fiction, however convincing, as factual evidence. I say this because it is clearly a habit he extends to fictional writing other than Lawrence's own. Helen Corke's autobiography provides a test case, and in some ways applies a touchstone to Philip Callow's biographical method. Miss Corke knew Lawrence as a young teacher at Croydon, became close enough to entrust him with the diary of her own tragic love-affair, and to allow him to base his own second novel, *The Trespasser*, on this diary. She too wrote a novel, *Neutral Ground*, based on her unhappy story, in which the young Lawrence appears as Derrick Hamilton, while she herself is Ellis Brooke. Some of the most striking and characteristic incidents in Lawrence's early life are known through her. Philip Callow uses one of these, without incidentally giving its source, to show Lawrence in a mood of extreme intolerance. This is Callow's retelling of the incident in his own rather breathless narrative style, which, by the way, seems somehow an entirely appropriate medium for a biography of Lawrence. He writes:

> She [Helen Corke] remembers at least one occasion when his normal self broke through savagely. They had gone into London together one Saturday in May to see some opera. They arrived too late. Lawrence wanted to take her on to a music-hall; he thought the carefree noise of it would do her good. Feeling jangly and irritable, she said no: he could go if he wished. She would make her own way home. He flew into a temper, pulled her into a bus and then off again when they reached Hyde Park. He gripped her arm and walked her up and down in the dense crowd, against the background of traffic. She almost hated him, he was so brutally insistent. Again she told him she was going home, her nerves couldn't bear to be exposed to such ugliness. She felt sick. Angry still, he marched in front of her to the station. Getting out at Croydon, after standing all the way in the crowded train, she burst into tears and ran off.

This incident is obviously taken from a passage in Helen Corke's novel, *Neutral Ground*. Taking up the story at the point where she refuses to go to the music-hall, it reads:

> "Come on then!" he said savagely, turning away. She followed him, surprised at his sudden change. He kept ahead of her till they came to a bus stop,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and then seized her arm and drew her on to a bus. It was full and she had no chance to question him, but assumed he was taking tickets for the railway terminus. He descended, beckoning her, at Hyde Park Corner.

"We'll go into the Park, shall we?"

The band had just finished playing; the Broad Walk was thronged with excited, noisy people . . . backed by the roar of traffic. She felt lonely and sick. Derrick walked up and down, holding her arm tightly, gazing into the faces of the crowd, smiling queerly. Even he had become unfamiliar, and she began to resent the compulsion of his arm. It was the compulsion of the Present, with which she had nothing to do.

"Do you want to stay any longer? I'm going home," she said presently.

"You're not enjoying yourself?" He looked into her eyes, his own hard and brilliant.

"I? No!" she was faintly contemptuous.

"Well! We'll go home." He dropped her arm and strode off, his face set with anger. She followed, miserable, angry, because some emotion of the moment, trumpery it must be, was disturbing her calm. They walked fast, in silence, to the terminus. The train was crowded; they had to stand. Outside the station Ellis turned:

"Go your own way, Derrick! I want to be alone."

"Nonsense! Of course I shall see you home."

To her own utter amazement she burst out crying and ran away from him. He followed, striding along beside her without speaking. She was controlled when they parted, and said no more than good-night tonelessly, not offering her hand.

In Helen Corke's reminiscences, however, the tone of description is quite different, and so are many of the details. After she has refused to go to a music-hall, she continues:

> He will not leave me and we board a bus going to Hyde Park. A band is playing; we join the crowd of people strolling up and down the Broad Walk. David is fascinated; he stares, smiling, into the faces of the passers-by; his face has an expression I have never seen on it before . . . I stop, release my arm from David's, and tell him I am going home. "You don't like it?" he queries, still with that strange smile. We take a crowded bus to Victoria, and a train to Selhurst, without having spoken again, and I wish him good-night at the garden gate without offering my hand.

It is clear that Callow has based his account of what happened on Helen Corke's novel, not on her actual remembrances. If it is argued that these latter were unknown to him when he wrote, I am afraid the answer is that it is the business of the biographer to find such things, always to get back from the secondary to the prime source. At all events, it can be plainly seen here what emphasis is given by basing a biographical incident on a fictional source. Writing up the incident for a novel, Helen Corke has herself heightened and dramatised it. In her novel, Lawrence (Derrick) seizes her arm and pulls her on to the bus for Hyde Park. There is no such compulsion in her reminiscences. When they leave the Park, in the novel, he "strode off, his face set with anger.

**Malcolm Bradbury**
**THE HISTORY MAN**
A classic of detached but savage humour by the author of **Stepping Westward** and **Eating People Is Wrong** – certain to be acclaimed as the key university novel of and about the last decade. **£3.50**

**Ivan Morris**
**THE NOBILITY OF FAILURE**
**Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan**
A remarkable biographical history of the heroic soul of the Japanese people.
*Illustrated in black & white with maps* **£6.50**

**Jeremy Sandford**
**PROSTITUTES**
A study of prostitution in Britain in all its forms by the author of **Cathy Come Home, Edna The Inebriate Woman** and **Gypsies.** **£4.50**

**Peter Webb**
**THE EROTIC ARTS**
A pioneering study of historical and modern expressions of sexuality in the arts.
*277 illustrations* **£9.50**

*To be published on December 1st*

**Susan Brownmiller**
**AGAINST OUR WILL**
**Men, Women and Rape**
The definitive history of the use and meaning of rape. **£4.90**

**Secker & Warburg**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She followed. . . . They walked fast, in silence, to the terminus." The picture of the man leading and the woman abjectly following does not appear in her memories. They simply take another "crowded bus to Victoria"—an incident abandoned in the novel because of its comparative pathos. Finally, in the novel, "she burst into tears and ran off" with him in pursuit, while the reminiscences give only a commonplace farewell. Everywhere the novel fastens on Lawrence a more abrupt, inconsiderate, even cruel character. Philip Callow, by taking the novel as his source, has perpetuated this more violent portrait of Lawrence at this point, coloured by the dramatic contrasts which Helen Corke, as a novelist, felt it artistically right to employ. She herself, in the reminiscences, gives a perfectly coherent account of this process in a note: "when writing the novel . . . my memory recalls in detail the *pattern* of that dismal night, and it is *woven into* the story." The italics are mine; they show how she herself selected what she calls "the pattern" of the events, not necessarily the literal events themselves, and "wove" them into her story. Biography is, of course, a creative art, and much more of this weaving and selecting goes on than many artist-biographers would admit. Yet every honest biographer must remind himself of Desmond MacCarthy's searching definition of a biographer as "an artist upon oath."

THIS BEING SAID, it must also be allowed that Philip Callow has produced, on the whole, a generally convincing portrait of the young Lawrence. He has tried to get under Lawrence's restless and itchy skin, and the result is an urgent and hasty narrative, which, even if it is more like a novel than a biography, does seem to be telling its story in terms that Lawrence himself would have understood. Sometimes indeed it is as if Lawrence, and not Callow, were speaking. In Callow's narrative we read:

> A man named Edward Marsh had written from England to say that he was editing an anthology of verse by the "new men" and could he include Lawrence's poem "Snapdragon"? The volume was to be representative of the Georgians, a rather tepid poetry movement then forming around Marsh as editor.

Surely there we are reading what Lawrence himself felt about the Georgian movement and its editor. He catches particularly well how Lawrence, like most Englishmen, was fascinated by a Lord, especially if that Lord turned out to be a Lady. It pleased Lawrence to be attracted, and then to reject, often in violent terms. Once again, he is very like Thomas Hardy, dancing with duchesses in their extreme *décolleté*, and then confiding sourly to his diary that their charms would be nothing in the rough working-clothes of Tess. Moreover, Callow does not mince Lawrence's wild intolerance of criticism, and the luxury he took in outrageous abuse. A simple rejection of a novel by a publisher could cause a tirade which many authors would wistfully wish they could afford.

> Curse the blasted jelly-boned swines, the belly-wriggling invertebrates, the miserable sodding rotters, the flaming sods, the snivelling, dribbling, dithering palsied pulseless lot that make up England today. They've got white of egg in their veins, and their spunk is that watery it's a marvel they can breed. They *can* nothing but frogspawn—the gibberers!

I had always assumed that this paranoid type of rhetoric belonged to the later Lawrence; it is disconcerting to find it appearing so early (summer 1912), especially when it was directed principally against "his Jew-ship" William Heinemann, most generous sponsor of early 20th-century authors. It is one merit of Callow's book that he makes even such outbursts both credible and understandable. The "mardy" boy who found refuge against school bullying in his abrasive tongue, the lover who had to dominate where he had not dominated as a son, the self-improving working-class youth who tore himself apart to reach an intellectual class which he so often despised on reaching, all combine. Perhaps the urge towards self-improvement should be more stressed and placed in its historical context. To quote again the Nottingham Exhibition note on Mrs Lawrence, Jessie, and Lawrence:

> In the essentially nonconformist cultural drive towards the acquisition of knowledge and self-improvement of these [early] years, both women, and Lawrence too, pulled in the same direction.

CALLOW RIGHTLY emphasises the family religion. They were Congregationalists, the spearhead of "the essentially nonconformist cultural drive." Though as an adult he said he detected the "beggar's whine" of Christianity, Lawrence found little whining in the hearty tub-thumping "Congo"—the local Congregational chapel—of his boyhood. What was even better, he found excellent pre-school teaching, and a source of poetic inspiration in the rip-roaring hymns. Here again, one thinks of Thomas Hardy's ambitious mother, ex-servant girl, defying the Anglican lady of the manor to send her son to the local Congregational school, with its brilliant head. Instead of the mindless Victorian curate, the butt of *Punch*, one could find teachers who, having come up the hard way in nonconformity, were prepared to understand and en-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BROWNING'S LATER POETRY, 1871-1889

*Clyde de L. Ryals*

Maintaining that Browning's later work has been underestimated, Professor Ryals gives close, sophisticated readings of the individual poems, covering each of the published volumes from *Balaustion's Adventure* through *Asolando*. He emphasizes the overall structure of a poem and the manner in which themes and ideas are presented. The later Browning is portrayed as "a poet intent upon discovering forms that would give shape and meaning to thought and experience."
Harold Bloom calls this book "a thoroughly informed and original study of a much-neglected body of poetry, some of which touches near the greatest of the earlier and middle Browning. This study is certain to be definitive, and to be of permanent use to all students of Victorian poetry."

288 pages £8.15

# POETICS, RHETORIC AND LOGIC

## Studies in the Basic Disciplines of Criticism

*Wilbur Samuel Howell*

A distinguished scholar here traces the interrelations of poetics, rhetoric, and logic from ancient Greece to twentieth-century England and America. Building on the theme that rhetoric has a recognizable identity of its own, Professor Howell discusses the theories of, among others, Aristotle, Horace, Thomas Wilson, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir John Harington, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Fénelon, Thomas Jefferson, De Quincey, John Stuart Mill, I. A. Richards, and Kenneth Burke. Hoping to correct what he regards as the tendency of modern scholars to misjudge rhetoric, Professor Howell clarifies the ways in which rhetoric and logic complement poetics in the evaluation of fictional and nonfictional works.

280 pages £10.75

# CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

**2–4 Brook St., London W1**

# THE FAILING DISTANCE

## The Autobiographical Impulse in John Ruskin

*Jay Fellows*

In this study of the more than forty volumes of Ruskin's writings, Fellows explores the English writer and critic's shifting contradictory impulses toward the situating of himself in space and time. He points out Ruskin's vacillation between the desire to become a pure instrument of vision, a lens through which the world might be viewed, and the inescapable need to involve himself in the landscapes he sees.
*The Failing Distance* begins with a study of Ruskin's visual system, moves through his concern with the self-annulling penetration of space, and then discusses the inevitable failure of recessional space, with the resultant shift toward both proximate space and use of the present tense. Fellows concludes that Ruskin's unfinished autobiography, the *Praeterita*, underlines the ultimately incomplete realization of the autobiographically present self.

208 pages £6.50

# VIRGINIA WOOLF

## A Critical Reading

*Avrom Fleishman*

In a close reading of Virginia Woolf's nine major novels, Avrom Fleishman elucidates the relationship between the novels and the mind that lies behind them. He suggests the range of the author's vision by using biographical, historical, mythological, textual, and literary historical approaches to isolate the Woolfian motif within her work. Fleishman considers the principle of repetition (of a symbol or allusion) to be an essential precept governing Woolf's work and indicates the relationship between repetitive patterns in the novels and the author's own compulsive need to revisit the scenes of her personal history and to identify these scenes with recurrences in human history.

256 pages £7.10

# JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

**2–4 Brook St., London W1**


PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Webster:
for people only
words apart

Communication. Language. Words. Webster. A natural progression, in reverse. Ever seached in vain for just the right word? Merriam-Webster Dictionaries —the only 'real', i.e., original, Websters— have been dispensing a scholarly and comprehensive knowledge of the English language for 130 years and now new editions or corrected reprints are available of all those we handle. People are usually only words apart.

**Webster's Third New International Dictionary,** 1971 Copyright Printing with Addenda, two volumes, *£62.50 net*
**Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary,** 8th edition, *£9.75 net*
**Webster's Biographical Dictionary,** 1972 Copyright Printing, *£12.50 net*
**Webster's New Geographical Dictionary,** *£14.95 net*

Bell
6 Portugal Street London WC2A 2HL

courage precocious talent in their working-class pupils. In fact, not only Lawrence, but all those who took part in his early years—the girls trying to read the right novels, appreciate the right painters, hear the right concerts—should be viewed as brave pioneers in an England painfully emerging from the class-stranglehold of the reign of Victoria. Thousands of miniature battles were being fought. There is a great pathetic interest in those who had not the aggressive flair which enabled Lawrence to "come through."

For many of these, apprenticeship as an elementary school teacher was the only way to survive. Helen Corke, originally middle-class but plunged into near-working-class poverty by her father's business failure, was one of these. It was an area where real heroism, all the more heroic for being generally mute, was silently shown. If Lawrence was over-vociferous at times, it was because he knew the poignant minor tragedies being enacted everywhere around him, particularly in the lives of the girls who formed the main background of his early years. If he sometimes took his role of being their prophet too shrilly, arrogantly and patronisingly, it was perhaps because of the reality and urgency of his human sympathy for them.

The crux in any biography of Lawrence's early years is its treatment of the great turning-point in his own personal history, the coming of Frieda. This is probably the most convincing piece of analysis in Callow's study. He gives what is possibly the best explanation so far of the desperate psychological and often physical battles, of which other people, such as Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, were frequently horrified ringside watchers.

> What was really at issue was Lawrence's frantic need for adoration, endlessly supplied by his mother and now strenuously denied by this young aristocrat who was herself quite accustomed to being worshipped . . . she failed to grasp the significance of those repeated agonised attempts by Lawrence, in *Sons and Lovers*, to tear himself free from his mother and make himself into a man, almost by an act of will. And this killing struggle did not stop at his mother's death. It was a continuous process of assertion. . . .

All the same, Lawrence and Frieda were more alike than they knew, especially in their deliberately childish teasing of all forms of authority. Frieda had some of the nature of the middle-class revolutionary activist girls of today, when, for instance, in touchy and spy-nervous 1915 England, she insisted on singing German folk-songs with Lawrence very loudly, or danced on the Cornish cliffs waving her white shawl like a submarine signal—an action which drew a burst of instinctive patriotism even from Lawrence. It was certainly she who, perhaps from some

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recesses of Prussian contempt, finally made Lawrence disenchanted with England, and sent him on the exodus with which this book ends.

THERE CAN BE no "neat" biography of Lawrence, and Callow has rightly not attempted one. Occasionally the slapdash style, for all its appropriateness to the subject, wears thin and begins to look like carelessness, with too little time spent on revision. It is disconcerting, for instance, to be told twice in only five pages that the family nickname of Lawrence's sister Emily was "Injun Top-Knot." Surely publisher's space and reader's time are wasted by the habit of introducing nearly every character twice, first in a manner of casual allusion, and, later, more formally with an attempt at biographical background. At all events, it would help the reader, if this method is thought necessary, to reverse the process and have the formal introductions first. The novelist's method fails here. Perhaps it is not even now time for a thoroughly balanced biography of Lawrence, totally based on first-hand sources. Material such as that supplied by Helen Corke is still coming in—the letters and memories of the girls he inspired and hectored, of the friends each of whom saw a different side of him. Almost every year brings a new batch. Only when all these have been assessed and weighed are we likely to get a full and living portrait of Lawrence in the round.

# The Survival of Dr Leavis

## *Bearing Reality—By* ROY FULLER

I JUDGE THIS to be one of Dr Leavis's more important books though its origins and organisation may at first blush seem rather curious.[1] Of its three parts, the first is, broadly speaking, a linking of the study of philosophy with the study of English literature—how the student of English literature may hold his own, as it were, *vis-à-vis* philosophy (that being traditionally the discipline with the more prestige and strenuousness). Or, to put it another way, to claim sensible philosophy as an ally in the view of life which results from a study of the major writers in Leavis's canon. There is an aspect of Leavis's arguments extremely congenial to me which I would want to emphasise by way of extension of what I have already (too narrowly and summarily) indicated. The student of "English" (and one needn't confine that term to the undergraduate or post-graduate) ought not to feel (I think Leavis implies) that some inherent ratiocinative profundity or subtlety in philosophy makes his own study inferior. On the contrary: philosophy may well take off into realms absurdly unrelated to "living life"; the study of the major writers, no less intellectually demanding, ensures the abiding sensibleness of "English" and its relation to human existence.

The beginning, particularly, of this section of the book is toughish going—partly through Leavis's brain-power (unimpaired at eighty) and partly through some invented defining terms. "Nisus" and "*ahnung*", for instance, the reader must get clear in his noddle (for a long time they were unclear in mine) and special meanings implied by inverted commas and by suffixes sometimes pile up pretty spectacularly. Yet we're never for long left without an illuminating example of trenchant opinion; and I very much like the way Leavis always comes clean about how his mind has been occupied—see, say, the modest but not uninteresting reading list on page 53.

Of course, Leavis's later works are very Wagnerian: *leitmotivs* from previous *opera* reappear incessantly, often scarcely changed from their original enunciation; and quite soon in this opening section our attention is drawn to the preposterousness of a computer writing a poem and of Auden being considered a major poet. I'm not myself troubled by this: I discount any wrong-headedness and accept as inevitable that a critic must carry his *trouvées* along with him as baggage through life—and better to bring them in again if they help to clinch an argument than coyly omit or find less apt instances. In any case, many notions here are new (though well in character): I don't recall, to take relatively minor but welcome instances, previous mention of "telly- and pin-table-addicted non-students" who now congest the "multiplied universities", nor (via Professor Andreski) his idea of our "cretinized and cretinizing civilization." Sometimes fundamental and acute things are thrown casually off: *e.g.* "To be intelligent about meaning is central to 'English' as a discipline"; and "a

[1] *The Living Principle: "English" as a Discipline of Thought.* By F. R. LEAVIS. Chatto & Windus, £4.00.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wittgensteinian enterprise . . . produces gratuitous logic, gymnastic fatuity, unprofitable conclusions and intellectual frustration."

But these are largely flourishes: the drift of the main argument, though not unfamiliar, has a solidity and vigour that I think justifies the claim in Leavis's preface to "a fresh approach to fundamentals." The polemic against Cartesian dualism of mind and body; the notion that "life" is in individual lives and that those lives are the artist's concern; the proposition that writers like Blake and Dickens "saw the creativity of the artist as continuous with the general human creativity that, having created the human world we live in, keeps it renewed and real"—this is how Leavis justifies the importance of "English."

THE "MORALITY" of great literature is illustrated by a remarkable analysis of Conrad's short story "The Secret Sharer", and it is an indication of the persuasiveness of the analysis that we don't feel it at all incongruous that part of the moral appeal is to the ethics of the training-ship *Conway*. The sense of human responsibility that comes out of works like "The Secret Sharer" the anti-puritan (says Leavis) would call "puritanism." Where is such a sense to come from today, when it is so desperately needed, but from the great writers?

And how, in any case, is it to be effectively diffused? "What I advocate", Leavis writes, "is opportunism. . . . Wherever there is a university 'teacher' with the vocation and the courage that should go with it the possibility exists; his initiatives are likely to enlist collaboration—and 'collaboration' covers a diversity of response and assistance. This is faith, but faith confirmed in experience."

Parts 2 and 3 of *The Living Principle* are intended to offer detailed practical proof of the validity of "English" as a mental discipline and of the moral values in great literature. One writes the bald sentence but it does little justice to Leavis's resource in this endeavour. Part 2 includes the "Notes in the Analysis of Poetry" which appeared long ago in the magazine *Scrutiny* (and are familiar through being reprinted in the two-volume *Selection from Scrutiny*). There they were tagged as "constituting part of a book", but the book never appeared and Leavis says that the present volume is not that book. The bulk of the material was written certainly before 1945, so it is not altogether pointful to complain, as Martin Amis and Peter Conrad did in their respective *Observer* (14 September) and *New Statesman* (12 September) reviews, that in these "Notes" Leavis was knocking down skittles of his own erection—purporting to correct taste when he was reinforcing it. If the preference for "Proud Maisie" over "They told me, Heraclitus", for "Surprised by joy" over "It is a beauteous evening" seems, to the sophisticated, glaringly obvious, much of the reason resides in Leavis's own work, and the work of his pupils, over the last thirty years.

I think the "Notes" fit in well here. They start to illustrate both of Leavis's contentions about "English": the profound morality of major literature; the intellectual power required to comprehend it. They embody some of Leavis's most sensitive readings (and best to have them conveniently in a volume of the author's own), of which I will give just one brief example. When Leavis asks of the Arden editor's note on Lady Macbeth's "screw your courage to the sticking-place" what, apart from an effect of tension, peculiar appropriateness can be found in the tuning of a musical instrument, we may reply out of familiar experience that gut and a wooden peg do indeed at a crucial point arrive at a "sticking-place", which Leavis seems to be forgetting. But then Leavis, in preferring the cross-bow as the reality behind the image, surely clinches the matter by remarking that the " 'screwing' here is no job for the fingertips", and adding most percipiently: "Besides tension, there is a contrasting sense of the release that will come, easily but dreadfully (a finger will do it now), when the trigger lets the cord slip from the sticking-place and the bolt flies—irretrievably."

IN PHILIP FRENCH'S excellent programme on BBC's Radio 3 for Leavis's eightieth birthday, I was asked and tried to answer why Leavis got on people's wicks. The process seems to be going on unto the third and fourth generation. Both Martin Amis and Peter Conrad virtually dismissed the long and distinguished analysis of *Four Quartets* that constitutes the third and final (and longest) section of *The Living Principle*. Amis observed, after saying that the section showed that "'the Eliot of *Four Quartets* 'denies human creativity' and 'recoils from being responsible': 'Useful to get that done' "—as though Leavis's labours were obvious or irrelevant. Conrad (whose performance was impertinent as well as obtuse) said, apropos of the analysis, that "Leavis's critical manner is also a kind of verbal shadow-boxing in which words mimic thought, but rather than arriving at a meaning collapse in incoherent heaps."

Such comments will merely reinforce the dim view held by Leavisites, inculcated by the maestro, of the critical standards of the heavy Sundays and weeklies. It may be true that the analysis of *Four Quartets* doesn't quite sustain itself throughout its length: when the fundamentally adverse

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

judgment has been thoroughly established Leavis seems to lose appetite a little for the poem's details about which, up to that point, he has been so brilliantly illuminating. But the whole thing must surely become one of the classics of criticism, both for its understanding of the difficult text and its elucidating in literary terms the "really real" deficiencies of the poem—terms, that is, established by Leavis in the first part of his book, terms in which literature is inseparable from life. How infinitely superior is Leavis's interpretation from the mélange of paraphrase and fantasy commonly offered in critical works, often American, today!

It would be hard without prolonged quotation to give an adequate idea of the finesse of the *Four Quartets* analysis. Perhaps it is at its best when dealing with "Burnt Norton." I give some detached observations by Leavis. "That *Four Quartets* offers us *thought*, searching, basic and rigorous, we have our assurance in the first ten lines of 'Burnt Norton'." Yes, indeed, this is what we feel, but who has pinned the feeling down so firmly before? "I had better say at once that early in my own acquaintance with *Four Quartets* as a completed work I experienced a decided arrest at

*human kind*
*Cannot bear very much reality,*

divining that this was an intimation of something basic in Eliot's 'answer' that I couldn't endorse." Yes, this is doubtless what we *ought* to feel, but did we do so until Leavis suggested it? And surely the following is a finely expressed summation of the attitude of most of us to the poem: "It is partly a compliment to the poet to say that for the first few readings of *Four Quartets* we may remain undisturbed by any arresting sense of unanswered questions—so obviously does the 'music' transcend paraphrases, and yet so persuasive is it in the impression of intellectual mastery it gives." How Leavis's analysis goes on from this point provides what I found to be enthralling reading—the prose-style sneered at by Peter Conrad proving a marvellous instrument for probing, sorting and gathering-up in the one operation.

Naturally, one sometimes registers disagreement. (In subsequent impressions the misprint on page 72 and the misquotations on pages 190 and 247 can be corrected.) And some may dislike, as really I don't, the reappearance of examples and quotations to drive home the argument (procedure possibly deriving from oral practice—the lecture or seminar or tutorial—where such things are far less noticeable). But surely no fair reader can finish this book without having his mind altered and ameliorated as to the vital matters treated.

**The Car Culture**
James J Flink

In this provocative appraisal of the economic and cultural history of the automobile in the United States, the author contends that there have been three stages. The first extended from the introduction of the car to the opening of the Ford Highland Park plant; the second was characterized by the mass idolization of the automobile that transformed life styles; and the final stage emerged in the late 1950s, since when the motorcar has been increasingly seen as a major social problem. **£8.25**

**Anti-Religious Propaganda in the Soviet Union**
A Study of Mass Persuasion
David E Powell

Soviet authorities have always believed that the secularization of society was a basic precondition for the creation of New Soviet Man. The author outlines all the measures they have taken to achieve their objective but devotes most of his study to the attempts to repress the Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish and Moslem faiths through education, propaganda and agitation. He gives detailed information based on official Soviet documents, Soviet scholarly research, and the insights of Western social science. Have 50 years' effort been successful? This study finds that at best it has been limited and at worst counterproductive from the Soviet viewpoint. **£13.75**

**Toward a Scientific Architecture**
Yona Friedman

This book represents the author's most recent and rigorous effort to develop an axiomatic method of design, one that will lead directly to user-defined structures, as opposed to those produced by the paternalistic architect-knows-best attitude. He proposes methods that are scientific, objective, programmed and pragmatic to bring results that are democratic, individualistic, participatory and utopian in nature. **£6.90**

**Abortion & the Sanctity of Human Life**
A Philosophical View
Baruch Brody

The author's compassionate and scholarly approach to this sensitive subject is not based on legalistic postulations nor on theological dogmas; rather, it is firmly rooted in the Western philosophical tradition and takes the form of a closely but lucidly argued application of the first principles of ethics. **£4.95**

**THE MIT PRESS**
**126 Buckingham Palace Road**
**London SW1W 9SD**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Do Poets Tell the Truth?

## *Autobiographical Excursions—By* ANTHONY THWAITE

WORDSWORTH SAID of his poetry that it was "a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself." Reading *The Prelude*, one takes the point. It's strange that things didn't go on like that, for one always supposes that for the Romantic poets their subject-matter was themselves. True, there was a small amount of autobiographical and quasi-autobiographical writing published by the Wordsworth/Coleridge circle in the decades before *The Prelude*'s appearance in 1850: bits of *Biographia Literaria* (1817), De Quincey's *Opium Eater* (1821), Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), and Leigh Hunt's autobiography in the same year as *The Prelude*. But after that, astonishingly, it's hard to find a poet writing autobiographically at any length, in verse or prose, until 1926, with the publication of the first parts (*Reveries over Childhood and Youth* and *The Trembling of the Veil*) of what later became Yeats's *Autobiographies*. Where are the autobiographies—or even autobiographical fragments —of Byron, Keats, Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, Arnold, Rossetti, Swinburne, Hopkins, Housman?

Of course poets used their own "experiences" as subject-matter for their poems, but seldom with the directness (however one estimates his veracity) of Wordsworth. Byron came closest to it, in a highly selective and cheerfully mordant way, in parts of *Don Juan*; but no one could regard that great work as being in any real sense an autobiography. The one book I can think of by a poet between Wordsworth and Yeats which goes in for detailed self-examination is Arthur Symons's *Confessions*—his fascinating and terrifying account of his 1908 collapse in Italy, written some time before 1917 and published in a limited edition in 1930, which an enterprising publisher should now resurrect, for psychological if not literary interest.

Since the late 1920s, however, poets seem to have memorialised themselves copiously, beginning with Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That* (1929), a book which bristlingly purports to tell the truth. Written in a couple of months before his thirty-fourth birthday, it has earned itself a lasting place for entertainment if not for accuracy. (I put on one side Hardy's *Early Life* and *Later Years*, largely written by Hardy in the guise of biography by his second wife, with all the canny reticence and evasiveness that such a ploy implies, and published posthumously in 1928 and 1930.) Simply to list the names, beginning with Graves's generation, of some of those poets who have written autobiographies, becomes a roll-call —though with significant gaps—of English literary life: Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden, Osbert Sitwell, Edwin Muir, Herbert Read, Richard Church, Roy Campbell, C. Day Lewis, Geoffrey Grigson, Louis MacNeice, John Lehmann, Stephen Spender, Laurie Lee, Clifford Dyment, Patric Dickinson, Thomas Blackburn, John Holloway, James Kirkup, Vernon Scannell, Patricia Beer, John Wain, P. J. Kavanagh, Dom Moraes. Within the past twelve months or so there have appeared autobiographical books by William Plomer, Kathleen Raine, Norman Nicholson, Dannie Abse, Michael Hamburger and Edward Lucie-Smith.

But the gaps are indeed significant. Nothing by Eliot. Only fragments from Auden—parts of *Letter to Lord Byron*, passing remarks in the Oxford inaugural lecture (*Making, Knowing & Judging*), the self-placing exercise he was up to in his *New Yorker* review of Evelyn Waugh's *A Little Learning* and Leonard Woolf's *Beginning Again*. With Dylan Thomas, only the light fictionalising of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* and some of the other prose sketches. With Philip Larkin, an essay on his Coventry childhood ("Not the Place's Fault") buried away in the obscurity of a shortlived Midlands periodical in the late 1950s, and the memoir of 1940 Oxford which forms the preface to the reissue of his novel *Jill*. With Ted Hughes, a short radio essay in 1964, "The Rock", and the first part of his BBC Schools Radio series which later became *Poetry in the Making*.

So much for the bibliographical spadework: a thin scatter of titles before *The Prelude*, then a gap of almost exactly three-quarters of a century, then—and increasingly since the 1940s—an immense amount of activity, by poets of widely varying persuasion, stature and age. Why the chronological graph should look like this I don't know. There is no lack, in the 1850–1925 period, of autobiographical writing by other people, from Queen Victoria's Journals to Barbellion's *Journal of a Disappointed Man*; but not by poets. Yet once the form was pioneered, apparently by Graves, the flood began, and continues. Even so, as recently as 1971 the blurb to Vernon Scannell's *The Tiger and the Rose* assured one that: "Poets



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

don't often write autobiographies. Their lives are usually quite taken up in their verse." An odd misreading of the evidence.

YET THAT BLURB-WRITER raises real questions. Why indeed should poets want to write autobiographical narratives in prose? Shouldn't a poet prefer to concentrate his personal "spots of time" and "moments of vision" in the medium which above all can memorialise such things? What are the moments and experiences which prove recalcitrant to poetry? Or is it a matter of the prose form acting as a complement to the verse? Four recent autobiographical books, by Plomer, Nicholson, Abse and Lucie-Smith, have made me speculate about all this. The Plomer[1] isn't a wholly new book, being an unfinished conflation of two earlier books, *Double Lives* and *At Home*: he was at work on it when he died towards the end of 1973, expanding, cutting and rewriting, and his friend Simon Nowell-Smith has added a postscript bringing the story down to Plomer's death. Norman Nicholson's time-span[2] is from early memories, towards the end of the First World War, down to September 1932 when, in his late teens, he returned to his native Millom from a TB sanatorium in Hampshire. Dannie Abse,[3] almost ten years younger, has a good deal about childhood days in South Wales but goes on to look at many more recent events in his dual role as poet and doctor. Edward Lucie-Smith,[4] ten years younger than Abse, begins with memories of childhood in Jamaica and effectively ends with his national service, post-Oxford, in the RAF; though two concluding chapters go some way towards anatomising his part in "the Group" and his initiation into the art world.

Born 1903, 1914, 1923, 1933. . . . In a period when so much thought about the recent past is neatly encapsulated into decades (already there seems to be a nostalgia for the 1960s, and the ten-year bloc has an instant appeal for journalists), the accidents of these four poets' births, conveniently spaced out over the first four decades of the century, might suggest that, taken together, their books would make a distinct overlapping pattern, a composite mosaic. That they don't is not just a matter of different personalities but of entirely different strategies (I am aware that

[1] *The Autobiography of William Plomer*. Cape, £7.50.
[2] *Wednesday Early Closing*. By NORMAN NICHOLSON. Faber, £4.50.
[3] *A Poet in the Family*. By DANNIE ABSE. Hutchinson, £3.50.
[4] *The Burnt Child: An Autobiography*. By EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH. Gollancz, £4.20.

JUST PUBLISHED . . .

**THE LETTERS OF SEAN O'CASEY**

**VOLUME I 1910-1941**

**edited by David Krause**

'A splendid book. There are two more volumes and they are in good hands, for Mr Krause's editing is generally excellent, with everything well filled out but not made top-heavy' – BERNARD LEVIN, *The Observer*

'As a letter-writer, O'Casey is first-rate. In spontaneity and sheer vitality he far outclasses James Joyce and W. B. Yeats. Professor Krause has provided a good framework for the mass of material at his disposal – the whole volume is something more substantial and less subjective than a mere collection of personal letters' – *The Economist*

'David Krause has performed an immense and valuable service in putting this 1,000 page volume together. In total the letters offer what Professor Krause rightly describes as an "informal and unguarded self-portrait" of O'Casey' – SEAN DAY-LEWIS, *The Daily Telegraph*

'His "Letters" are a feast, a marvellous, unselfconscious portrait of the artist to compliment and enrichen his autobiography as well as his other work. Our gratitude is due to David Krause for his editing of the letters, for his research and scholarship and the unfailingly illuminating introductions to the ten sections' – JACK SUTHERLAND, *Morning Star*

1008 *pages illustrated with black and white photographs and line drawings*, £12.50

**CASSELL**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strategies are often determined by personalities, but the relationship is a delicate one). To what extent, for example, is the autobiographical writer agent or patient? In his preface, William Plomer wrote:

> I have not wanted to try and magnify myself, or justify myself, or make an exhibition of myself, or turn myself inside out. To have lived through nearly three-quarters of this century has not made for monotony, and I hope that is one thing I have avoided in trying to relate myself, without undue name-dropping, to my background and various environments, to a variety of other people, and to different aspects of the social, literary, and political life of my time.

That careful, urbane, self-assured tone is characteristic of Plomer. There's something a bit chilly and remote about it, a courteous but utterly composed mask turned towards the world. So reluctant is he to thrust himself forward that one has reached page 75 before he is born, the earlier pages being taken up with accounts of his 18th- and 19th-century forebears. South Africa, schooling at Rugby and back to Africa take him through several more chapters, full of entertaining incident and nicely placed social detail but almost as unrevealing of the man himself as it's possible to imagine an autobiography. The temperature is even, the atmosphere that surrounding a suave anecdotalist. When Roy Campbell appears on page 167, and becomes a literary collaborator and friend of Plomer's in the stiflingly provincial South African society, it comes as a shock to find Plomer writing that "Campbell and I had in common a sense of isolation and alienation, *and we were both high-spirited*" (my italics): high spirits are little in evidence, here or later in the book—a quietly quizzical sense of the ridiculous, a mildly supercilious eyebrow raised at other men's folly, a low-pitched chuckle at discomfiture, but nothing that could be described as high spirits.

Reading Plomer, what one gradually becomes aware of is that here was a man who knew, for all the unconventional indirections of his early life (farming and running a shop in Zululand, going on impulse on a cargo boat to Japan and then staying there a couple of years as a teacher), exactly what he was up to. He seemed to emerge fully formed as a writer, with his novel *Turbott Wolfe*, finished when he was only 21. When he arrived as a young man in London, "Bloomsbury" took him to its bosom. Thereafter, for forty years as reviewer, editor, literary adviser, novelist and poet, he was a benign and respected figure on the English literary scene. Nothing seemed to ruffle or discountenance him; in that milieu of gossip and petty intrigue, he was genially aloof. By the time I first met him, in the late 1950s, he had the appearance of a bachelor uncle, courteous, impassive, ready with a rotund but never wounding quip. And that is the immaculate person one meets in his *Autobiography*.

It's important, I'm sure, that (according to Simon Nowell-Smith in his postscript, and I had heard it quoted before) Plomer regarded his friend J. R. Ackerley's *My Father and Myself* as "a book that should never have been written, let alone published." The homosexual society it revealed with such lowering candour was well known to Plomer—he was indeed part of it—but Plomer considered it, and all similar revelations, "tiresome and uncivilised." Nevertheless, his own manner of dealing with the subject in his *Autobiography* goes beyond reticence to coyness. In Greece in the early 1930s, he describes "swimming . . . with an inhabitant of Athens of my own age with whose physical beauty I had become infatuated." The circumlocution at once establishes the sex of the "inhabitant", and the rather laboriously idyllic passage that follows ("sparkling wavelets", "we . . . kissed the saltiness from one another's smiling lips") is embarrassing because of its defences, not because of what it reveals. (This passage, by the way, is taken without any changes from the earlier *At Home*, first published in 1958; Plomer evidently felt that the growing public frankness of the subsequent dozen or so years made no difference to the manner in which he wished to express himself.) The affable mask through which the macabre jollities of his best-known poems were uttered ("Slightly Foxed", "The Flying Bum", "The Dorking Thigh", "The Self-Made Blonde", etc.) looks more and more like a tidy screen put up as protection against a crowd of self-revealing bores and boors.

THERE SEEM TO BE no such defensive strategies in Norman Nicholson. One could say—though I think it would be irrelevant in this case—that when a man in his early sixties chooses to write an autobiography that doesn't take him beyond the age of 18, then there is no need for defensiveness anyway: the recorded self is so distant that no feints or obliquities are necessary. More to the point is that *Wednesday Early Closing* is almost as much a biography of a place as an autobiography of Nicholson: Millom, the small town in Cumberland where he has spent all but two years of his life. Still living in the house where he was born, with kin and childhood neighbours still close to him, and with every street and building in Millom redolent of an observant lifetime, he knows his environment with a scrupulous intimacy, and glories in it. As he expressed it in the conclusion of one of his best poems:

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*My ways are circumscribed, confined as a limpet*
*To one small radius of rock; yet*
*I eat the equator, breathe the sky, and carry*
*The great white sun in the dirt of my finger nails.*

These lines are pitched a great deal more exaltedly than anything in *Wednesday Early Closing*—more so, too, than most of Nicholson's other poems. Only in the final sentence of the book does he step back from the closely watched circumstantial: "Forty years later, in that same attic room, I thank God for a lifetime spent in that same town." The sentiment is obviously heartfelt, and has been earned and made credible—as well as creditable—by the pages that have preceded it. I know few books which so authentically chronicle the minutiae of a community, with such relish for detailed quiddities, the tang of speech, the celebration of "gear and tackle and trim" for their own sake. Yet it is a personal book too, recorded by a speaking and idiosyncratic voice, never doubting that that "one small radius of rock" will hold the reader as resolutely as it has held the poet. The poetry and the autobiography are all of a piece, one throwing light on the other. When Nicholson returns to Millom after his two years in the New Forest sanatorium, not cured of tuberculosis, indeed committed to a convalescence which was to go on for the next forty-odd years, the sense of homecoming is tender, delicate, precarious.

NORMAN NICHOLSON'S impositions have been those of an inescapable isolation, a provincialism which he must have decided (or had decided for him by whatever shapes our destinies) to make his strength: a reversal of Wesley's "the world as my parish." Dannie Abse came from a background one might think of as doubly removed from conventional English literary life, being both Jewish and Welsh. But these weren't barriers; rather—in a household dominated by "the dialogue between Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx" as it was interpreted by his elder brothers, one to become a psychiatrist, the other a politician—the young Abse was thrust quickly into serious, passionate, adult debate about urgent global matters. At fourteen, during the Spanish Civil War, he was at a Catholic school where he was the only boy against Franco. He read the *Left Review*, *Poems for Spain*, and his first poems "had a missionary intention."

Not that *A Poet in the Family* is a solemn *Bildungsroman*: girls, football, daydreams and ribaldry are running themes too, and the charm of the book (for it *is* charming, in a way one can't use the word of either Plomer or Nicholson) lies in the deft, almost offhand tone of voice, purporting to tell the truth but not making much of

H·E·B

**Christmas in Africa**
**Jeni Couzyn**
This impressive and original collection of poetry will further enhance Jeni Couzyn's already considerable reputation. 'Christmas in Africa' is the title of the long autobiographical poem which forms part I of the book. The second part, 'Inside Outside', is largely based on science-fiction by Brian Aldiss. The third 'The Needy' reveals Jeni Couzyn's power as a poet of protest. Part IV, 'Graces', fulfils its title in bringing the collection to an affirmative, life-accepting finale. "Jeni Couzyn's poetry is the genuine thing, natural and unique." *Ted Hughes* **£1.80**

**Soundings**
*Edited by* **Kit Wright**
An anthology of poetry prescribed for candidates taking the Poetry Society Verse Speaking Awards. It consists of English, Scots, American, and foreign poetry of all periods, with particular emphasis on the twentieth century. The poems are above all chosen for their sound qualities. There are five sections, broadly arranged in ascending order of difficulty and maturity.
**£2.80** **£1.25** paperback

**Vietnam**
**Hugh Higgins**
The most up-to-date study available of the conflict in Indo-China from the days of French rule until the fall of Saigon in May 1975. The author evaluates different historical interpretations of the war offered by opposing ideological standpoints.
**£3.80** **£1.50** paperback

**Heinemann Educational Books**
48 Charles Street, London W1X 8AH

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

truth-telling. In this type of writing, comic deflation of one's younger self or selves is part of the formula (one sees it raised to the power of mannerism in Dylan Thomas's quasi-autobiographical fictions); and the danger is that the "mature" author, looking back, will be indulgently patronising. Abse sometimes seems on the edge of doing this, but is held back by a firmly balanced practicality, evident in the way he writes about his career in medicine—and "writing poetry, too, was an immersion into common reality not an escape from it." Asked, on the last page of the book, what kind of poems he writes nowadays, he replies: "They are the poems of a fortunate man." There is no smugness in the answer, for—like Nicholson in that other closing sentence—he has earned the right to say so. The book is the evidence. But—and this is an important difference between Nicholson and Abse—it is auxiliary to, rather than concomitant with, the poems.

IF DANNIE ABSE'S strategy is a sleight-of-hand which attracts by being casual, informal, discursive, the relaxed reminiscing of a friend who isn't going to embarrass his hearer by blurting out buried confessions, that of Edward Lucie-Smith's *The Burnt Child* looks at the start as if it's going to be an exercise in concentrated and meticulous self-communion: "The first thing that I know I remember clearly is a small chromium-plated buckle. I open my eyes, and it swims into focus." Such Proustian beginnings (reminding one, too, at a lower level, of Compton Mackenzie and James Kirkup) need something more sustained and resonant than Lucie-Smith is prepared to give them. These early chapters, sensitively placing him in his background as the only child of a colonial administrator in Jamaica, are certainly well done; but they add only detail to what he did even better in a handful of poems in his first book of verse fifteen years ago—"A Tropical Childhood", "The Polo Player", "The Bonfire", "The Lime-Tree." Later, at boarding school on the island in "a kind of tropical Cheltenham", there is an account of how the news of his father's death was brought to him—succinct, thoughtful, but again no more than a gloss on the Lucie-Smith anthology piece, "The Lesson."

Once he reaches school in England, the chronicling becomes less dense; and by the time he is up at Oxford it is almost perfunctory, with the "memories" of contemporaries (appetisingly promised by the blurb) actually little more than a naming of names—Jeremy Thorpe, Norman St John-Stevas, John Gross, George MacBeth, Adrian Mitchell, etc.—fleshless figures who are listed and left at that. (I make two appearances, one of them as an unnamed "old friend" who said—"guilelessly"—"Whoever would have thought that you would come to anything, Teddy?".) Obviously some of my disappointment at the way in which Lucie-Smith handles this part of his life is that I think I remember it as more interesting, indeed more bizarre, than he apparently does. But it isn't really a question of memory; it is a question of reticence. Some inner compulsion, or some considered strategy, has made him colourlessly circumspect—which is odd, coming from a man who in *Who's Who* lists one of his recreations as "malice."

I'm conscious of being least fair to Lucie-Smith's book among these four: one tends to be hardest on one's contemporaries. To be just, I ought to point out that the chapter on the history of the "Group", that strenuous poetic workshop of the late 1950s and 1960s which was so much identified with Lucie-Smith, gives an intelligently dispassionate account, and deserves a niche in literary history. (Though a friend and admirer of some of the participants, I was never an habitué: I think I was invited three times to read poems to the Group, and always emerged feeling as if piranha fish had given me a going-over.) Curiously enough, Edward Lucie-Smith has himself provided a text which bears on anyone contemplating writing an autobiography—a

Arts 38

**A new gallery in London W1**

**For modern paintings of appreciable value by**

**F. N. SOUZA**
**VILMO GIBELLO**
**RAYA KRUK**
and other selected artists

Mixed Show of small Paintings for HANUKKAH and CHRISTMAS

At present RAYA KRUK's FROM ISRAEL EXHIBITION is on view

**38a HOMER STREET**
**LONDON W.1.** Telephone 01-262 2653

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poem, again from his first book. It is called "The Monster":

> *Being too strange, a monster brought*
> *From climates of another thought,*
> *I therefore make another "I",*
> *And all my life act out a lie—*
> *Lying, forget what creature grows*
> *Within the sheepskin suit of clothes.*
>
> *Until one day the sheepskin rends*
> *While naked in the gaze of friends,*
> *Shame and concealment quite outgrown,*
> *There stands the self I cannot own:*
> *Something too terrible to free,*
> *Too insignificant to be.*

That "monster", it may be, can be dealt with more effectually by poets who grapple with it in their poems rather than attempting to tame it, clothe it, justify it—or ignore it—in the sequential narrative of autobiography. It is not simply a matter of "telling the truth": as Augustine of Hippo put it, "How do they know, when they hear from myself of myself, whether what I say is true?" Writing about oneself is not just preservation but self-preservation. The intensity of poetry can preserve what the careful diurnalisms of autobiography too often disperse, trivialise, or disguise.

# The Novelist as Dictator

## *New Fiction—By* JOHN SPURLING

REVIEWING A BOOK in *The Times* early last year, Richard Holmes wrote of "that frontal advance of the biographic form . . . which now surely promises to make the biography, as a genre, the most fruitful in contemporary English writing." His own special interest in it being so was revealed a few months later when he published a weighty reappraisal of Shelley. All the same it is noticeable that biographies are generally given greater prominence than novels on review pages and that one's acquaintances, even if they haven't read them, are more aware of the latest biography than of the latest novel.

The phenomenon is not as new as all that. In the epilogue to *The Characters of Love*, published in 1960, John Bayley writes:

> I think we are already beginning to see a great revulsion in the reading public against the whole idea of the writer's consciousness. Memoirs, biographies, accounts of war and travel in which other people have a real existence, are coming more and more to the fore.

Bayley is not of course arguing against fiction. The purpose and achievement of his book is precisely to examine how three masters of fiction "can liberate the inner life of their characters", can create characters that, beyond speaking to us, simply "are." But his epilogue is an attack, though a characteristically well-mannered one, on "most modern novels."

The attack centres on the pursuit of "meanings" at the expense of character: "we more and more assume that the novelist . . . need not start out by making his characters like 'real life', but will subordinate their individuality to the general atmosphere and purpose of the work." Bayley distinguishes those traditional writers who take Nature for granted from those more modern ones who hold an attitude towards the Human Condition. He suggests that our heightened awareness of ourselves and of the changes in the world beyond ourselves leads to novels which concentrate on the individual consciousness, which explore the "exceptional" rather than the habitual world, which attempt to pin down the peculiar significance of "our time." "The fatal drawback" is that "the writer, like some self-devouring pelican, is really feeding the audience on his own consciousness, not on that of his characters" and "the commonest and most dangerous assumption the modern novelist can make is that his world—just because it *is* his world—must fascinate other readers."

I paraphrase arguments from a very well-known book only because, 15 years later, the sort of novels Bayley is attacking are so much the general rule that we are perhaps in danger of forgetting there is any alternative. If we are all reading biographies, is it perhaps less the fault of the Novel than of the novelists?

V. S. NAIPAUL'S *Guerrillas*[1] begins with an evocation of a Caribbean island on the verge of revolution. The method is familiar enough, might indeed be borrowed from the title sequence of innumerable films: two of the central characters are put into a car and driven out of town. They pass slogans: *Basic Black. Don't Vote. Birth Control is a Plot Against the Negro Race.* The scenery is described with detailed care:

[1] *Guerrillas.* By V. S. NAIPAUL. André Deutsch, £3.25.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOSEPH ANTHONY WITTREICH, Jr., *Editor*

**MILTON AND THE LINE OF VISION**

Who and what is Milton? What is the place he fills in his own vernacular literature? What station does he hold in universal literature? These questions, suggested by Thomas De Quincey, are addressed at length in this collection of original and thoughtful essays. Together, they attempt to locate Milton at the centre of a tradition of English poetry—the line of vision—that encompasses, among others, Chaucer, Sidney, Spenser, the major Romantics, and many moderns.

Wisconsin Forthcoming 299 06910 9 £10.50

JOHN S. BRUSHWOOD

**THE SPANISH AMERICAN NOVEL**

**A Twentieth-Century Survey**

In *The Spanish American Novel,* John S. Brushwood analyses the twentieth-century Spanish American novel as an artistic expression of social reality. In relating the generic history of the novel to extraliterary events in Spanish America, he shows how twentieth-century fiction sets forth the essence of such phenomena as the first Peron régime, the Mexican Revolution, the Che Guevara legend, indigenismo, and the strong-man political type. In essence, he views the novel as art rather than as document, but not as art alienated from Society.

Texas Forthcoming 292 77515 6 £9.60

FRANCIS E. HYSLOP

**HENRI EVENEPOEL**

**Belgian Painter in Paris, 1892-1899**

The Parisian career of the Belgian artist Henri Evenepoel was part of that fabulous decade when the French capital was the centre of artistic activity. A student of Gustave Moreau at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he was a classmate and friend of Matisse, Evenepoel pursued a wide range of activities including poster design, book illustration, printmaking and music sessions with his friends.

Penn State 1975 271 01182 3 £8.70

DAVID MICHAEL JACOBS

**THE UFO CONTROVERSY IN AMERICA**

What are the full facts about UFO's? The author of this revealing book explains the reasons for the misleading and often deceptive measures that the Air Force has engaged in to debunk UFO reports, prevent congressional investigation of its UFO programme, and discourage scientific examination of the full data. He shows how the interplay between the Air Force, the scientific community, the bizarre "contactees", and the mass media have led to an often shocking ignorance of the potentially significant UFO phenomenon.

Indiana 1975 253 19006 1 £6.00

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS GROUP LTD.**

70 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3BY

Tel: 01-405 0182

> The sea smelled of swamp . . . after the rubbish dump burning in the remnant of mangrove swamp, with black carrion corbeaux squatting hunched on fence-posts . . . after the new housing estates, rows of unpainted boxes of concrete and corrugated iron already returning to the shanty towns that had been knocked down for this redevelopment . . . the land cleared a little.

Next factories, then "what remained of an industrial estate, one of the failed projects of the earliest days of independence." In this "waste land" of bush, secondary forest, paved areas of concrete and asphalt is a place, surrounded by forest, where the land has been cleared. But the land, though ploughed, is full of weeds and there is an abandoned tractor "half into the forest." The car stops beside a concrete and corrugated iron hut. This is the "People's Commune" run by the third central character of the book and called Thrushcross Grange.

The point about this opening is that, although the two people in the car—a white South African liberal called Roche (Rochester?) and his white mistress called Jane (Eyre?)—are given a few snatches of dialogue, the scenic description is presented directly by the writer to the reader and for all its apparent objectivity conveys a strong sense of distaste. Furthermore the characters are from the outset brushed into it. They are wholly subordinate to the author's consciousness, with its powerful implication of desolation and decay. Jane is given the line: "I used to think that England was in a state of decay." Her consciousness is not only not separate from the author's, it is being used by him to open a further line of meaning in the novel, the comparison between the state of England and the state of this Caribbean island, just as the name Thrushcross Grange for a people's commune must at least suggest the idea of comparing the black revolutionary Jimmy Ahmed with Heathcliff.

In fact, of course, he has more in common with Naipaul's fellow-Trinidadian, Michael X or Abdul Malik. Like Malik, Ahmed has been first raised up, then abruptly dropped by trendy revolutionary circles in England; like Malik, he is dropping still further in his native island; like Malik, he murders. But this comparison, though it must so soon after Malik's execution be present to most readers' minds, is not intrinsic to the novel. Ahmed, whatever his original basis in a real person, is fully integrated into Naipaul's scheme of things. He is, like the scenery, the atmosphere and the other characters, an element in the significance of the novel. Since Naipaul is an outstandingly skilful novelist, all these elements start off the page with seemingly independent life, but like the three-dimensional models which stand up from inside children's

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

books, they are all ready to lie down again as soon as the writer's meaning demands it.

THE BOOK, IN ITS OWN TERMS, is hardly open to criticism. Naipaul's materials—his characters, white and black, political or apolitical, his city, his island, his commune, his background story of an abortive revolution overcome by the local authorities with the help of American helicopters, his foreground story of the complex sexual and political relationships between Ahmed, Roche and Jane—obey his lightest whim. So in a sense does the reader, slipping along the greased rails of the writer's purpose.

To take a single example, there is this description of a secondary character at his first entrance:

> Meredith was short and walked with a spring. He was slender but his body looked hard: he was heavier than he looked. He wore a white shirt with a button-down collar; it was unbuttoned at the neck but not too open, and it didn't suggest holiday dress. The shirt was too tight over his solid shoulders, the collar was too close to the neck: a tie seemed to be missing.

Meredith's background has already been placed before the reader. He is an ex-politician, has been one of the island's ministers, but is now a successful lawyer with another career as a radio personality. The two white people, Jane and Roche, resenting his apparent contentment as a "political drop-out" and his happy home life, have come to consider him somewhat "suburban." He is meeting them again on a Sunday at a house by the beach. The description above is direct authorial intervention, not filtered through the consciousness of any particular character. Why does it dwell so much on the shirt collar? The reader registers a slight disturbance and passes smoothly on.

Only much later do we learn that in the crisis of the approaching attempt at revolution Meredith has been called back into politics. Unknown to the other characters as well as to the reader he was already a minister again when he appeared in that holiday setting. His collar is a tiny signal, a typically deft touch on Naipaul's part, but one which operates independently of any of the characters involved and which, almost unnoticeably, reduces their independence.

If one is dissatisfied at the end of the novel it is certainly not with the machinery, nor even with Naipaul's reading of a contemporary *malaise*, which he makes clear enough by extracting a quotation from his own text and putting it at the front of the book: "When everybody wants to fight there's nothing to fight for. Everybody wants to fight his own little war, everybody is a guerrilla." This is Ahmed speaking. The white

NEW FROM DENT

**Lessons of Ulster**

T. E. UTLEY

An important and provocative book; not just a history of the recent troubles in Ulster but a critical study of British policy there during the last seven years. Mr Utley's contention is that the handling of Ulster affairs at Westminster indicates not merely ignorance of Ireland but ignorance of the nature of politics itself. A leading journalist with special experience in Ulster affairs, T. E. Utley proposes in detail his own solution.
£4.95

Modern Ideologies series
The first title

**Socialism**

R. N. BERKI

In this new study of the growth and major doctrines of socialism, the author argues that socialism can be better understood by reference to its four basic tendencies: moralism, rationalism, egalitarianism and libertarianism than by attempts to reduce it to any one central idea; and offers a vivid and concise analysis of the interaction of these tendencies in western social democracy, the European Marxist establishment, socialism in the Third World, and the New Left.
£3.50; Paperback £1.75

DENT

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

girl Jane is given the knowledge "that she had come to a place at the end of the world, to a place that had exhausted its possibilities." Her lover Roche says: "Oh my God, why is anyone of us allowed to live at all?" The pessimism of Naipaul's outlook, the unlikability of his characters would not in themselves make the novel seem unreal, if they were not imposed so dictatorially. The reader is at no point permitted to form his own impressions of this gloomy island or have private words with its inhabitants. The writer's consciousness is for ever at his elbow and it is his only human contact.

THE NOTION OF an author's love for his characters is defined by Bayley as "a delight in their independent existence as *other people*, an attitude towards them which is analogous to our feelings towards those we love in life; and an intense interest in their personalities combined with a sort of detached solicitude, a respect for their freedom." His point could hardly be better illustrated than by the contrast between Thomas Hinde's first novel *Mr Nicholas*, published 23 years ago, and his most recent, *Our Father*.[2]

[2] *Our Father*. By THOMAS HINDE. Hodder and Stoughton, £4.40.

The subject-matter of *Mr Nicholas* is depressing, its atmosphere claustrophobic. The pervading gloom is hardly mitigated for the middle-class English reader by the familiarity of the setting, the ordinariness of the incidents. But it is perceived, felt, communicated, rather than imposed. The book has no authorial "meaning" beyond the obvious one: if you don't wish to feel like this, don't live like this. The characters of *Mr Nicholas* are trapped and injured, but the possibility of their not being so lingers round them. There is an all-important gap between Hinde's complete control over their circumstances and his partial withdrawal from their reactions as individuals. To some extent this is a matter of technique, of burying his own consciousness within that of an involved narrator, but one can see from the way the same sort of technique doesn't work in *Our Father* that it is most of all a matter of the writer's will or instinctive ability to relax his own consciousness. He cannot begin to respect the freedom of his characters if they have not first achieved a measure of independence in his imagination.

The suffocating Home-County misery of *Mr Nicholas* has become in *Our Father* a strident metropolitan despair. Like Naipaul, Hinde uses scenic evocation to soften up the reader and point his responses in the required direction:

**In Our Infancy**
*An Autobiography 1882–1912*
HELEN CORKE
In this volume of autobiography, Helen Corke, now aged 93, recalls her childhood and youth before the First World War, and her association with D.H. Lawrence. Helen Corke's 'Freshwater Diary' became the basis for Lawrence's *The Trespasser*, published in 1912. **£5.50 net**

**Modern Fantasy**
*Five Studies*
C. N. MANLOVE
In this book Mr Manlove has chosen a representative group of the more important and better-known modern fantasies—Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*, George MacDonald's fairy tales and romances, C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan*, *Gormenghast* and *Titus Alone*—and examines their strengths and limitations.
**£6.50 net**

Paperback edition
**The Dramatic Experience**
*A Guide to the Reading of Plays*
J. L. STYAN
**'It is all clearly set down and gives the reader a good perspective without involving him in unnecessary, encyclopaedic details.'** *The Times Educational Supplement* **Paperback £2.50 net**

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Three stories below him, on they hurried, eyes down, breathing exhaust fumes, ears full of the continuous roar of engines, expecting at any second to be struck by a passing car. . . .
>
> Slots jammed with dummy coins, smashed receivers, ripped wires, one grey metal cabinet so distorted it must have been struck systematically with a heavy bar—it could have been a city looted by invading troops. . . .
>
> The grinding roar of hundreds of engines, a gust of icy rain-filled fog reeking of diesel fumes and a dislodged shower of builders' dust and soot smuts. . . .

These are all passages associated with the consciousness of the central character, a small, hectic man called Hugh. Since he already has a strong tendency towards paranoia and the novel records the effect on him of being left out of his father's will in favour of a hated elder brother, one might suppose that his view of London was not necessarily the author's. But all the other preferred characters—Hinde makes it clear which characters he approves of and which he doesn't—see the city and occasionally the country beyond in similar terms. Here is Olive Grey, the simple-minded do-gooder: "Always she was near to tears. This beautiful country as it had once been, before they cut it up with black roads, filled its air with fumes. . . ." Here is the heroine, Valeria, in Leicester Square:

> Every seat, paving stone and patch of grass was spattered grey-white with their shit and she expected at any moment to be struck. She saw it as a sample of the future, nature reduced to the most scavenging species, a starling-and-sparrow, bramble-and-stinging-nettle world.

Here is Alf Pigeon, the probation officer:

> Coming down the Clapham South escalator at rush hour next day there was jeering laughter behind him. Looking back, he saw a solid double column of drawn faces descending on him, but not one of them laughing. At the foot he tried to wait, but the column, released into a wider space, spread out and hurried forward, forcing him with them.

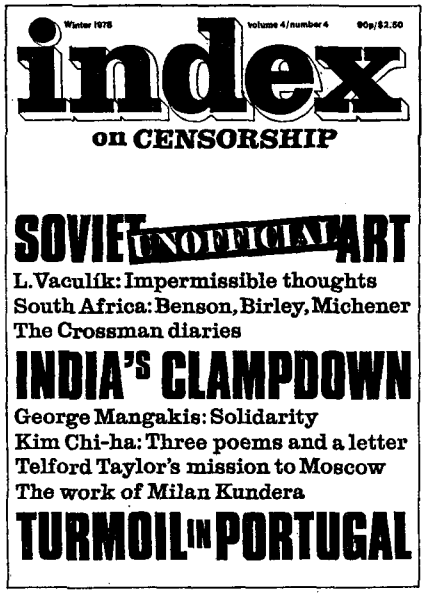
These are all in themselves true reports, but spread through the book, insisted upon, they amount to an attempt at programming the reader. The characters, as well as being made mouthpieces of this feverish atmosphere, are whirled about in it. They don't so much relate to, as impinge upon one another. The plot is more a series of antics than actions. Occasionally, as in a party scene (Hinde is always good at parties) or a scene set in a City pub at lunch-time, the dancing of many puppets together takes on an independent life denied to any single character on his own. And even though they are being used to buttress the book's "significance", there are images memorable in themselves, such as the van containing ten men dressed as Ironsides which is

**The Rise and Fall of British Documentary**
The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson
*ELIZABETH SUSSEX*
The image of British documentary has usually been one of prestige and a certain doctrinaire stuffiness. This book is an attempt to recreate the real experience behind the myth—utilizing a kind of documentary method itself, by intercutting commentary and conversations. Ms. Sussex talked with all the important living figures of the movement about its complex conflicts, frustrations, and missed chances. Her account is tempered, critical, and knowledgeable.
256 pages £6.50 (early 1976)

**Sixguns and Society**
A Structural Study of the Western
*WILL WRIGHT*
The Western might seem to be not only a well loved but almost too well known film genre. However, this remarkable study, applying innovative structuralist analysis to Western plots, comes up with novel discoveries about the forms of traditional and recent Westerns—uncovering changing mythic patterns that correlate with changes in American society.
The book is the most successful structural analysis of films yet done in English, or perhaps in any other language: it demonstrates that the analytical techniques of Propp and Lévi-Strauss can have workable application to a major film genre.
240 pages £6.50

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS**
**2-4 Brook Street, London W1**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED




**SOVIET unofficial ART**

'What they are indulging in is not innocent games with pure art, but in its essence the active propagation of bourgeois ideology. We must not allow a hostile ideology to penetrate into our midst under the guise of innovation . . .' I. Gorin on the non-conformists.

**GEORGE MANGAKIS**

'One night one of my guards threw a small piece of paper into my cell which quoted broadcasts by the BBC and expressions of solidarity. He did this a number of times and ran very great risks. Each time I had to read the paper and then eat it . . . This action saved me. Once again I acquired confidence that I was in the right, because I felt that I wasn't alone and so I wasn't mad.'

**LUDVIK VACULIK**

'I wrote the manuscripts because I had succumbed to the impression that I was at home in my flat, where no one can see or hear me. It was late at night, say, and I felt sad or angry. And so I put my thoughts on paper, freely and without restraint, like before the war. Or during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Or as if it were peacetime.'

**TURMOIL IN PORTUGAL**

The Armed Forces Movement promised to restore freedom of speech. But after an Ad Hoc Commission, a New Press Law, nationalisation, the plight of *Republica* and 'Jesuino's Proposal', it is clear that the freedom of the press is still in peril.

96 pages £1 or US$2.50. From 21 Russell Street, London WC2B 5HP.

SUBSCRIPTIONS £3.60 pa or US$10 from **Oxford University Press.**

USA & CANADA: BOOKSTORE DISTRIBUTION by **Random House Inc, New York.**

held up in a Piccadilly traffic-jam or the Christmas barge party seen from the banks of a canal:

> When it was close he realised that much of the boatload was in drunken turmoil. They seemed to be playing some game and there was a continuous scrumming, squealing and staring down at the water as one after another was pushed to the side but didn't dare jump.

But it is difficult to catch a glimpse of anything that looks real except the author's woebegone face. With its references to striking miners, uncollected refuse and candle-lit offices, *Our Father* has the air of having been written during one of our recent winter crises. It already seems dated, though the coming winter may give it fresh relevance; but *Mr Nicholas*, through the independence of its characters, has become independent of time.

NO ONE COULD ACCUSE Francis King of flaunting his consciousness or even of imposing a slanted attitude towards the Human Condition on his readers. His best novels—of which *The Needle*[3] is certainly one—are like chamber pieces for their delicacy of tone and clarity of line, but also for their apparent lack of a conductor. *The Needle* has a third-person narrator, not a participant in the action, who unobtrusively sets scenes and times, moves characters from bed to bath, offers a little personal history where necessary, describes a gesture here, a facial expression there, reads the mind of a character when there is no occasion for dialogue. He combines the functions of reciter and attendant in a Japanese Noh play, moving the story along between incidents and stepping forward from time to time to rearrange the actors' costumes.

If King's London seems grey and seedy (though never apocalyptically so, as in *Our Father*), it is because the characters happen to live in grey and seedy circumstances rather than because King has got it in for London or contemporary society. When his heroine, a G.P. with a practice in Parson's Green, says: "That's life—a perpetual state of vague worry, or at least, that's what it is for me", the sentiment stops with her, not spilling over into the relation between writer and reader. Her partner's warning: "There'll always be mess and inefficiency in this country. More and more of it. So you'd better reconcile yourself" is belied as a counsel of despair by the speaker's own sturdy efficiency in the surgery. Belied, but not entirely cancelled,

[3] *The Needle*. By FRANCIS KING. Hutchinson, £3.45.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

since she is physically crippled and her home is squalid. King is adept at introducing little knots of complexity like this into the clear line of his narrative. They neither impede nor advance it, but belong somehow to a separate level of the book, the observation of character.

Our unobtrusive attendant is more of a tyrant than at first appears. Though he never uses settings to convey attitudes, one begins to suspect that he loves his settings more than his characters. He certainly loves his plot best of all. *The Needle* sounds nasty and it is. What seems, to begin with, ordinary and sad turns twisted and sharp. The early impression of independence in the main characters is an illusion caused by not knowing them well enough and they cannot be properly understood until the plot has tightened round them. For this reason the novel's after-taste is stronger than its taste in the mouth. What one goes away with is no substitute for biography but a real sense of place and a *frisson* from the virtuosity of the plot.

BUT THE NOVEL OF CHARACTER is not yet extinct. Perhaps Ferdinand Mount's second novel, *The Man Who Rode Ampersand*,[4] is a rare instance or perhaps, like the reaction among certain young painters against the abandonment of visual art, it heralds a return to an older tradition. At any rate Mount's novel is so firmly a full-length portrait of its central character and the narrator is so subdued to his task that the reader simply assumes without further question that he is reading a biography of the novelist's father.

The book's structure reinforces this impression: five chapters of first-person narrative prose, in which the son explores his own memories of the father and grapples directly with biographical reconstitution, are interspersed with episodes in straightforward fictional style, dialogue plus third-person narration. The plot is made to hang from the character. The lesser characters, lit only by their relationships with the central character, their chief purpose to reflect aspects of him, come on with a sense of off-stage freedom. They remind one of an army hair-cut: what's under your cap is your own, what's outside is the army's.

The novel's tone is that of the traditional English memoir: detached, humorous, lightly shaded with nostalgia. Its weakness, especially in the narrative passages, is a tendency towards being precious. The narrator compensates for his reticence about himself with a rather sweet tooth for phrases—"His feet broke the shimmering web of morning, leaving matt-green prints in the grass"—and a donnish delight in the ponderous "So my ruminations on my father were a celebration of his patriarchal authority." But these are ill-judged intrusions of the writer's consciousness rather than part of a consistent system for controlling the reader's responses: they actually work against the book's purpose.

The long passage from which I have taken both quotations is, apart from such intrusions, a fine example of Mount's method. Beginning with a view of the father's bare feet seen walking in his garden by the narrator as a small boy, it shifts through a series of sharp visual images—childhood reminiscences expanded by adult analyses—a reference to "The Lord God walking in his garden in the cool of the day" and, apropos the father's dressing-gown, another to Joseph's coat and the age of Noel Coward, and explodes suddenly in "a spurt of rage. A patricidal mist." The child improvises a wooden dagger. "My father was already out of range, but he came back to look at the wallflowers like the Archduke Franz Ferdinand returning home by another route, thus allowing the astonished anarchists a second shot. . . ." The dagger is thrown, brushes the dressing-gown, is unnoticed by the father and the narrative passes on to other matters.

I CALL IT Mount's method, but of course it is not. He may have arrived at it independently, but I suspect that he has borrowed it quite consciously, adapting it for his own use, from Anthony Powell. Either way, *The Man Who Rode Ampersand* is a cheering sign of how versatile the method is. It is also a reminder that with the completion of *A Dance to the Music of Time* those like John Bayley who regret the dominance of the writer's consciousness at the expense of the characters needn't yet abandon hope for the Novel.

[4] *The Man Who Rode Ampersand*. By FERDINAND MOUNT. Chatto and Windus, £3.50.

**RESEARCH CONSULTANTS**
Leading academics

**RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**
Experienced honours graduates

**TRANSLATORS**
Qualified, most European languages

**ARCHIVISTS**
*Try our range of services, sources and subjects*

**Research Assistance Routledge Associates**
**25 Woodhayes Road, London S.W.19**
*Phone* 01-947 5614

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## *POINTS OF THE COMPASS*

### *The Portuguese Revolution*

# Withered Carnations

### *By F. R. Allemann*

OF ALL THE revolutionary processes of our time none has confronted its observers with more dramatic changes of direction and a more "irregular" development than the one that was set in motion on 25 April 1974, when Western Europe's oldest and apparently most solid dictatorship was toppled by a military *coup*. What has happened in Portugal since that day has not only confounded most prophets, optimists and pessimists alike; its meanderings may also serve as a timely warning to those who are fascinated by the idea of historical "laws"—as if political upheavals were not the unpredictable work of men but followed some pre-ordained course of logical events in a more or less rigid automatism.

I do not intend to retrace, even in the sketchiest way, the whole complicated story, but only to offer a few observations about some aspects of a highly original phenomenon. I shall not confront the details of the latest, deepest and most long drawn-out crisis which, since July, has brought to the fore some of the basic problems and contradictions. Any attempt at a balanced assessment of the Portuguese Revolution runs up against the difficulty that its outcome is far from settled. Events are so strongly in spate that what is written in one moment risks being swept away by the time it is in print. Whether the new (sixth) Provisional Government formed by Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo in the middle of September really constitutes a solution to the preceding crisis or only a further fleeting episode in its development is as yet far from certain. It may certainly mark a watershed: the point from which the trend starts running in a different direction; yet it could as well indicate merely a slowing-up or a temporary reflux in a continuing revolutionary stream.

HAVING STOOD ITS GROUND for 48 years, Portugal's authoritarian and conservative régime collapsed virtually overnight, almost without a blow being struck. Bloodshed was minimal and popular rejoicing widespread. A Spanish journalist christened this upheaval "the flower revolution" because the inhabitants of the capital spontaneously showered the insurgent troops with red carnations. Less than a week later, when units of the Army, Navy and Air Force joined workers in celebrating May Day, the same flowers not only adorned the buttonholes and caps of the marching troops but were stuck in the muzzles of their rifles and the tank turret guns. They were the symbols of that new, free and peaceful era which was supposed to be dawning.

Something over a year later, on 25 July 1975, after an emergency session lasting ten hours, the 240 officers and other ranks who represent the Revolution's military substructure in their capacity as "The Assembly of the Armed Forces Movement" issued a bluntly-worded communiqué which proclaimed that "politico-military power" had been "concentrated" in the hands of a Directory comprising three generals. Reference was made in this stern announcement to the "authority and security of the Revolution", to "the need for strong leadership", to "revolutionary discipline" and "firm action against elements who, for counter-revolutionary purposes, are creating a climate of agitation among the People." One word was conspicuous by its absence: freedom. Fifteen months after Lisbon's festival of flowers, this particular concept seemed to have lost its magic, at least for the proctors of the Revolution.

If one discounts the epithets "revolutionary" and "counter-revolutionary", the Portuguese must have found this vocabulary strangely familiar. Authority and Security, Strong Leadership, firm action against Elements who create a Climate of Agitation—all these had been dinned into them for nearly half-a-century. Precisely the same terms were voiced in 1926 by the generals who put an end to the short-lived, disorderly, chaotic and corrupt democratic Republic. Salazar had a fondness for using the same expressions throughout the 40 years of his personal régime; and they tripped with equal fluency off the tongue of his successor, Marcello Caetano.

Was it merely that the wheel had come full circle? Had Portugal escaped the yoke of "fascism" only to succumb to a new dictatorship which did no more than offer the mirror-images of yesterday's slogans?

The wheel had indeed turned. Most observers were convinced at the time that a democratic order was already "out of the running" and that the only open issue was whether the triumvirate would prove to be a transition to a totalitarian communist system or to some "progressive"



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

military one-man rule (for which General Carvalho looked the likely candidate).

Yet scarcely two months later the whole picture has changed out of recognition, with the triumvirate gone for good, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) firmly in the hands of its "moderates", and a representative government in charge of a strong pro-democratic majority. This is certainly an unexpected development, unexpected even for those who, like myself, had remained somewhat doubtful of the stark pessimism spread by the prophets of gloom. How did this change come about? To answer this question, we first have to look at the reasons for the prevalent despondency.

THE COMMUNIQUÉ of 25 July was undoubtedly couched in ominous language. There was an even more ominous ring to the dire threats indiscriminately levelled at "reactionaries" and "social democrats" by General Carvalho, triumvir and commander of the COPCON security force, on his return from Castro's Cuba. Even so, these were all, at the time, mere verbal proclamations of intent: threats of repression do not, by themselves, make repression a reality. In fact, the breakdown of the Portuguese power structures had gone so far, by this summer, that it was difficult to see how any government could possibly resort to strong-arm methods. As long as a number of sharply conflicting and indeed irreconcilable forces remained at least roughly in balance, none being powerful enough to eliminate the rest, the Portuguese scene seemed bound to be dominated more by anarchy than by despotism (although the former is a notorious spawner of the latter).

Confusions of this sort can prove disastrously mistaken; they blind one to the peculiarities of the Portuguese revolutionary process. Its image in democratic countries is all too often distorted because people view it through glasses tinted by experience of Eastern Europe. Conservative observers, particularly, have for more than a year been gazing so spellbound at what they considered to be an inexorable seizure of power by the Communists that their firm expectation seemed, to some of them, already to have materialised. World War II was followed by the establishment—everywhere from Poland to Yugoslavia—of totalitarian one-party régimes which were Stalinist in type and officially defined as "People's Democracies." Therefore many proceed on the tacit assumption that the outcome in the far-western corner of Europe can be no different—indeed, that its outlines are already plainly discernible. The result of this illusory perspective is that they pay no further heed to any element in this highly complex field of tension which fails to accord with preconceived ideas.

IN REALITY, the East European pattern does not fit Portugal at all. The country has no Soviet forces of occupation with whose active assistance a Communist minority could seize absolute power. Soviet Russia is far off, Franco's Spain too territorially adjacent, and NATO naval forces too close by sea. Even the *Partido Comunista Portugués* (PCP) under its ardently pro-Kremlin (and undeniably intelligent) secretary-general, Alvaro Cunhal, is compelled to pay lip-service, if nothing else, to the country's traditional "Atlantic orientation" and allow for special geographical difficulties in the way of Party strategy. It is, for instance, significant that the Communists have never demanded Portugal's withdrawal from NATO and have described any discussion of membership of the Western Alliance as "currently irrelevant." Although this may be pure tactics (and probably is), it at least reveals the extent to which even Stalinist orthodoxy acknowledges the peculiar features of the Portuguese situation.

This by no means precludes the possibility of a Communist take-over. The Cuban example has shown that there are no grounds for "geographical fatalism." If Fidel Castro managed to break the American bonds of an island situated on the very doorstep of the USA and transform it into an advanced outpost of the "socialist world system", something similar is far from impossible in Portugal.

Outwardly, Fidel Castro's revolution pursued a very different course from that of the MFA. The savage two-year guerrilla campaign which carried the Cuban partisans to Havana from their redoubt in the Sierra Maestra bore no immediate resemblance to the carefully planned and swiftly executed *putsch* unleashed by the Portuguese military, which was well in line with the classical tradition of Iberian (and Latin American) military coups. More important than this outward diversity, however, is a resemblance based on inner development. Each insurrection started out as a revolt, launched under strictly democratic auspices, against an unpopular dictatorship. In each case, victory was very soon succeeded by a rapid process of radicalisation in which the original democratic postulates faded into the background, to be replaced by a total remoulding of society (the "building of socialism") which was scarcely based on the declared will of the majority.

It is as instructive to trace these parallels as it is to note where the lines diverge. Like Castro's

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra", the "Programme of the MFA" proposed "free elections" within twelve months from the overthrow of the dictatorship. In both documents, *Guerrilleros* and Military Revolutionaries indicated that they would not personally wield power during the transitional period, but restrict themselves to a "supervisory role", intending that governmental authority should in other respects be left to representatives of the political parties. Compared to this timetable for democratisation, which was defined with some precision, references to desirable social changes took very much of a back seat; they were only vaguely formulated, and were couched in a studiously moderate and "reformist" tone.

The subsequent shifts in accent followed a similar course. Either the original platform was openly abandoned or the content of the first programme was reinterpreted. In Cuba, Fidel Castro took only a few weeks to brush aside the civilian Premier Miró Cardona, and to instal himself in his place. In Portugal, the intellectual brain of the revolutionary officers, Colonel Vasco Gonçalves, replaced Professor Palma Carlos as Premier with equal rapidity. After a somewhat longer spell of preparation, the heads of state appointed by the revolutionaries themselves (Urrutia in Havana, Spinola in Lisbon) quit the scene after being forced into retirement because they were regarded as "impediments" to the transformation of a political rebellion into a social revolution. Nor was the ensuing transformation occasioned by any irresistible pressure from the "masses." It received its crucial impetus from above—from collaboration between two activist minorities of diverse provenance who were temporarily heading in the same direction. To keep the Revolution moving forward in a systematic manner, the radical wing of the Armed Forces allied itself with the Communist party machine, newly emerged from the political underground with an efficient *apparat*.

WITH THE EXPULSION of "reactionary" elements from the original united front against dictatorship, the revolutionary processes which had hitherto followed so remarkably similar a course began to diverge. Cuba's path led almost straight to the new totalitarianism which derived its ideological justification from Castro's explicit avowal of "Marxism-Leninism." In Portugal, on the other hand, this dynamic encountered incomparably stronger and more enduring resistance. Only a few months after his accession to power Castro was able, with brutal candour, to revoke his promise of free elections on the grounds that the People's joyous acclamation was proof enough of their consent to all his government's measures. In reality, he could rely not only on the mesmeric effect of his public appearances but also on his authority over former comrades-in-arms, which was virtually unchallenged. He was indeed the "*líder máximo*"—the absolute leader—even before being glorified as such in true Latin American *caudillo* style. Furthermore, Washington's increasingly vigorous attempts to exert pressure afforded him an opportunity to justify his ever more stringent personal régime on patriotic grounds. The "*Yanquis*" provided him with the universally feared and hated external foe so necessary to the internal consolidation of autocracy.

NONE OF THESE CONDITIONS obtains in Portugal. The 200-odd officers comprising the conspiratorial hard core of the MFA prior to the coup included no "charismatic leader" who towered above the rest. All decisions were collectively taken from the outset. Matters were debated and agreements reached either by all members jointly or, if that was impracticable, by leading groups, until a consensus had emerged from their deliberations. This practice invested the movement, even in its latter stages, with a quality which may be called democratic or oligarchic (each element prevails in turn). But it precluded dictation by a single individual or even by a small group—and seemed for a while to make majority decisions unnecessary. Only as political polarisation gradually set in and distinct "blocs" of a more or less organised kind began to take shape within the MFA cadre, later enlarged, did formal votes become customary in the various politico-military bodies. Even then, a vestige of the old corporate spirit survived. As far as one can judge from outside, even avowedly conservative MFA officers were very seldom affected by the successive military purges which followed the crises of September 1974 and March 1975, provided they had not been implicated in openly insurrectionary ventures. Very few were, for even the prominent anti-Communists among them would never at that time have entertained the idea of taking up arms against their "left-wing comrades." Most of those responsible for the coup of 11 March, which failed so lamentably (and was probably triggered by deliberate provocation), were not associated with the revolution of 25 April.

Although the peculiar structure of the military avant-garde has not hampered the increasing spread of extremist tendencies within the revolutionary élite, it has probably subjected their influence to certain practical limitations. Social Democracy, the first ideological banner to be

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

raised, very soon lost its appeal and was swiftly replaced by a belief in the need for (and the possibility of) a great leap forward into the Utopia of a classless society. Even after the shock of 11 March, which imparted a fresh and exceptionally sustained fillip to the process of radicalisation, the majority of the MFA could not make up their minds simply to cancel the promised Free Elections for a Constituent National Assembly. Account had still to be taken of the surviving and numerically far from insignificant "moderate" wing, and a large proportion of the radical elements, too, were loath to break a solemn undertaking. They duly resorted to a characteristic compromise and interim solution. The population could go to the polls as promised—but the parties had to pledge themselves, in the constitution to be evolved, to cement the hegemony of the MFA and Supreme Revolutionary Council over all future political institutions for a term of "three to five years."

It is probable that most of the military thought this compromise rather a skilful little gambit. It guaranteed them the substance of power whatever happened. The forces of the extreme Left, who would have preferred to follow Cuba's example, did warn, even at that stage, that concessions to "bourgeois-democratic prejudices" might prove to be a disastrous mistake; and from their point of view the warning was fully justified. The elections inflicted a grave defeat on the Communists, their fellow-travellers of the MDP or Democratic Movement who sailed under "supra-party" colours, and the left-wing socialist splinter-groups who collaborated with them. The 12% of votes cast for the Communist Party, not to mention the 4% with which the MDP had to content itself, revealed the true extent of their isolation—and this despite the PCP's marked superiority over all its rivals in terms of organisation, propaganda and, last but not least, financial resources.

Since the result did little to alter the real distribution of power, PCP leader Alvaro Cunhal had ample reason to dismiss the outcome as "wholly irrelevant." Although the two incomparably most numerous and strongly anti-Communist blocs—the PSP socialists with 38% of the total poll and the self-styled "social democrats" of the Popular Democratic Party, or PPD, with 26%—won a combined majority of nearly two-thirds, their numerical strength secured them nothing commensurate in the way of political influence. Instead, it only reinforced the country's *de facto* rulers in their belief that the people's "reactionary" blinkers prevented them from recognising their true interests, and that they were consequently "not ripe for democracy." (This was exactly what Salazar, from his very different point of view, had repeated time and again.) And this, in turn, lent encouragement to those within the MFA who aimed at excluding the electoral victors altogether by establishing a "revolutionary people's power" with the aid of activist minorities.

It would none the less be wrong to underestimate the very real significance of the PSP–PPD success because its weight in the political scales was at first "only" a moral victory. The awareness that they were backed by a large and indisputable majority of the Portuguese population strengthened the moderates in their will, and ultimately power, to resist Jacobin-totalitarian tendencies. It is true that the result of the poll made little impression on the leaders of the MFA, and the hope that it might prompt them to tread the path of democratic socialism proved a will o' the wisp. Instead, complete supremacy in the Revolutionary Council, and still more in the Armed Forces Assembly, was now won by those who aspired to a further unleashing of the "revolutionary dynamic" irrespective of election results. But in plunging onwards the extremists committed their second blunder. Having allowed the people to be consulted, they tried to dismiss the result as wholly irrelevant. The voters' verdict had so boosted the self-confidence of the victorious parties that they now ventured upon the trial of strength which they had always eschewed in the past. By withdrawing their ministers from the government they quite openly posed the question of Who Should Govern?

THIS IN ITSELF suggests that the Armed Forces' decision to keep their promise of free elections marked the real revolutionary watershed. It had so far been possible to preserve some degree of cohesion between incompatible forces aimed to solve Portugal's problems either by democratic or by authoritarian and totalitarian means, and this cohesion depended more and more, as time went by, on increasingly vague and ambiguous formulae. Now that the popular preponderance of the democrats was in open conflict with the dominance of the radicals inside the MFA, a breach could not be long in coming. The major crisis which occurred in July was preordained by the decision at the polls and the Armed Forces' refusal to pay it genuine heed, regardless of exactly when the Constituent Assembly underwent the dissolution to which it seemed doomed.

At this juncture, however, the political development of Portugal entered a phase unlike anything in that of Cuba. Cuba never witnessed a really fierce and protracted debate within the "progressive" camp which continued once elements of a

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more or less conservative hue had been ousted. When Castro's erstwhile fellow-partisan, Major Huber Matos, attempted to stem the pro-Communist tide, he was immediately tried and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for "rebellion." Again, although the Cuban trade unions were at first overwhelmingly anti-Communist (unlike the Portuguese), organised labour was reduced to total conformity by "cold" means. None of these moves provoked any organised, let alone sustained, resistance. In Portugal, a stubborn struggle went on and escalated for several months without producing a final and irrevocable decision in favour of one side or the other.

THIS IS BOUND UP WITH a second factor peculiar to events in Portugal—one whose full significance Western observers often fail to recognise: the fragmentation of the radical camp. Under Castro's aegis, Batista's downfall was succeeded in Havana by a swift rapprochement between Castroites and old-time Communists. This led eventually to the fusion of two élites whose recent rivalry had sometimes amounted to open antagonism. The Cuban Communist Party had at first condemned Castro's guerrilla campaign as "petit-bourgeois adventurism" and only jumped aboard the victory bandwagon at the last moment. Having compensated for its earlier miscalculation by clinging all the more tightly to Castro's coat-tails, it finally won him over by its unqualified support. In Lisbon, Cunhal embraced the MFA in a similar tactic, but with far more sense of purpose. He unreservedly acknowledged its claims to leadership from the outset, and he accepted the effacement of his own political profile so as to commend himself to the Military Revolutionaries as an ideal ally and trusty civilian instrument of their will.

The PCP's attitude had its intended effect on the officers. Accustomed to hierarchical structures, they were favourably impressed by the well-disciplined manner in which the Communist cadres functioned. It seemed that in Portugal, too, the Military and Communist machines were developing a convergence similar to that which had occurred in Cuba. But this trend was joined in the course of time by one moving in the opposite direction. As military discipline relaxed, political controversy pervaded the Armed Forces. Revolutionary enthusiasm kicked over the traces, and the admiration for Communist efficiency felt by many of the military radicals who had abandoned "reformist" ideas was replaced by an increasingly manifest disapproval of the Party's authoritarian style. It became all too obvious that it was trying, amid loud protestations of loyalty, to ensconce itself in niches of power throughout the country. Inside the Armed Forces and its leadership, too, the mounting over-ideological urge for "Total Emancipation" and the "severance of all traditional ties" came into conflict with the doctrinaire rigour which was becoming discernible behind the outward flexibility of Party communism. To some of the MFA leaders and their supporters, revolutionary salvation now appeared to lie in efforts to preserve revolutionary momentum. They dreamt of experiments with new and unprecedented forms, not of the establishment of a rigid new system. The conflict was personalised because one of these groups rallied round the Prime Minister, Vasco Gonçalves, while the other found a spokesman in General Carvalho. Gonçalves joined Cunhal in wholeheartedly advocating the East European "people's democracy" model. Carvalho sought ideological inspiration from some of the "ultra-Left" groups which under the most diverse auspices—Maoist, Trotskyist, soviet-Luxemburgist or Bakuno-anarchist—were quite as opposed to the hegemony of the PCP (which they characterised as "opportunist" or "social fascist") as to the alleged capitulation of "reformism" to the bourgeoisie.

Nothing of the sort could have happened in Cuba. There Castro was pursuing an ultra-Left rather than an orthodox Leninist line at the time the Communists let him take them in tow. Chile in its *Unidad Popular* days furnishes a much closer analogy in its distinction between two opposing revolutionary schools of thought; but this comparison is equally lame. In Chile, the Communists worked in harness with the (weak) bourgeois Left and the Social-Democratic elements of the Popular Front coalition by warning against precipitate revolutionary change, constantly counselling "moderation", and refusing to sever all links with the Christian Democratic centre. Allende's Socialist Party, in company with left-wing splinters off the Christian Democratic Party and (non-Popular-Front) extremists of the MIR, systematically strove for an abandonment of democratic legality. In Portugal, by contrast, Cunhal and his military friends dropped the pose of studied restraint they had preserved during the early months as soon as they reckoned that the backing of an important MFA group had brought absolute power within their grasp. By so doing they prematurely alienated the totality of democratic socialist opinion. They also alienated those who had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with them against "reaction" and "reformism" but were not prepared to submit to Communist direction, control and discipline—I refer to those who pursued the mirage of an "authentic", non-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bureaucratised Revolution founded on Direct Participation by the masses.

Right to the end Cunhal's party could not make up its mind to side with one of these two camps against the other. At one time, it spurred its military friends into measures against certain groups of the "ultra-Left", whom it considered to be a particular nuisance. Thus the strongest (or at least the most vocal) of the various Maoist formations, the MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Proletarian Party), was not only barred from taking part in the Elections but actually banned (though the prohibition of its activities was never put into practice). At other moments, the PCP negotiated and finally formed a United Front with Trotskyites, Maoists, and other heretics and marched alongside them in common street demonstrations—only to break this alliance again within a few days. In the end, this hectic manoeuvring and zigzagging cost the Communists even more of their credibility than their earlier rashness in prematurely disclosing their power game (what the Portuguese called their "triumphalism"). In the course of the crisis, they managed to arouse ever mounting suspicions among all their possible partners.

QUITE APART FROM THIS, the split in the left wing of the revolutionary forces completely transformed the political order of battle. In place of the straightforward confrontation between "moderates"—whatever this term may be taken to mean in a Portuguese context—and "radicals", there emerged a triangular set-up which was infinitely more complex, more unfathomable and, above all, harder to manipulate The pro-Communists were inadvertently caught between two fires. They had to deal with stubborn adversaries who insisted on observing a minimum of democratic rules But they encountered further opposition from those who appealed over their heads to "direct participation" by the revolutionary proletariat and aspired to quite novel and unprecedented forms of "People's Power."

The Communists continued to assert their superiority, even within this triangular scheme of things, less on account of their numbers than by virtue of their concerted and thus highly effective approach It was not they, but their opponents on the Right and Left, whom a malicious foreign observer aptly characterised by remarking that every officer in the MFA leadership constituted "a party-faction in himself." Essentially, this still applies to the ultra-Left today. Its two most formidable figures, Carvalho and "Red Admiral" Rosa Coutinho, are also its most idiosyncratic, erratic and maverick members and have consequently proved unable to coordinate their activities. After the recent split within the COPCON ranks between Carvalho and some of his most extremist officers, Carvalho was darkly denounced as just another "opportunist." As for the military "moderates" (who tend rather to regard themselves as democratic left-wing socialists), it was only this summer that they first emerged as a reasonably close-knit group. When they finally took their stand, they were held together largely by their opposition to Gonçalves and his PCP allies on the one hand and to the "People's Power" schemes of the "anarcho-populists" on the other. And, above all, they came to share the belief that the tide of "anti-communist excesses" in Northern Portugal could be turned only by greater sensitivity to the real wishes and needs of the population, not by tougher repressive measures.

ONLY BY BEARING in mind this strange plexus of antithetical (and fundamentally heterogeneous) tendencies can one quite comprehend the creeping paralysis that overtook the MFA authorities. Precisely because no tightly organised and well-defined blocs existed (apart from Gonçalves's pro-PCP supporters), the fluctuating moods and fleeting spur-of-the-moment alliances between members of the Assembly and the Revolutionary Council produced a state of affairs in which resolutions already carried were repeatedly put up for further discussion, reinterpreted, or simply withdrawn. Under such circumstances, there could be no question of a coherent process of decision-making. The most that ever emerged was a fairly convincing majority of nay-sayers. On some occasions, pro-Communists and Ultras blocked "right-wing" proposals that "revolutionary achievements" be consolidated and the pace of new experiments reduced; on others, moderates combined with the extreme Left to oppose inordinate bids for power by the Communists. But none of the revolutionary bodies succeeded in evolving a positive and consistent policy. Wherever it appeared that such a policy had at least been sketched in outline, closer scrutiny revealed it to be a hotch-potch of tactical subterfuges. This applied to the MFA Assembly's controversial resolution in favour of a system of local soviets which had shortly before been rejected by the same body. Driven into a corner, the Gonçalves group sought to escape the isolation that threatened them and to trip up their "right-wing" opponents by espousing the extreme left-wing projects which they had originally turned down. The resulting "united front" was just as short-lived (and spurious) as all similar earlier and later combinations.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE INCAPACITY to act above encouraged the spread of anarchy from below. It was perhaps natural that the collapse of the over-rigid Salazarian system should have been succeeded by some degree of unrest and arbitrariness among individuals and small groups. But a situation developed in which each body of opinion could press and, if necessary, impose its claims by force as long as it justified its action in the fashionable revolutionary jargon of the day. The laws—not only those carried over from the old régime but also, and particularly, those promulgated after 25 April—could be ignored virtually at will. The argument that regulations still officially in force had long ago been "superseded by the development of the revolutionary process" was not only accepted by executive organs of government but adopted as a maxim.

For example, Carvalho's military flying squad, which was primarily responsible for the maintenance of public security and order, received express instructions from its commander to act on the sole principle that "the workers are always right" and to intervene only when illegal acts were "not in the interests of the Revolution." Although Carvalho likes to define this rule of conduct as a principle of "revolutionary legality", he is really talking about a legitimacy which takes precedence over *every* form of legality, "revolutionary legality" included. This amounts to a complete negation of the rule of law. It makes any verdict on the admissibility or inadmissibility of an act dependent on the individual's assessment of its expediency or inexpediency relative to that grand indeterminate, the "revolutionary cause." If one proceeds on this premise, it naturally follows that the individual is at liberty to decide how far to obey any orders from above. More than once—as in the case of the socialist newspaper *República* and the Catholic radio station *Radio Renascença*, both of which were taken over by a section of their staff and ideologically redirected—COPCON flatly refused to secure compliance with decisions of either the Revolutionary Council or the Cabinet and thus compelled higher authority to yield.

These and similar signs of disintegration have exerted their effects upon the Armed Forces themselves. In the most thoroughly politicised units stationed in and around Lisbon, it has by degrees become quite normal procedure for private soldiers and NCOs not only to demand the dismissal of their commanders (or other politically unpopular officers) but actually to vote them out on their own initiative. Senior military authorities, up to and including the relevant chiefs of staff, tend either to give way at once or, after endless wrangling, accept some makeshift compromise. The results of this wholly uncoordinated *ad hoc* "democratisation" are daily perceptible. The Armed Forces are manifestly and progressively disintegrating into separate components which are themselves identified with different political factions. Lisbon has Moderate, Communist, and ultra-Left regiments, and some of the latter have established links of varying closeness with splinter-groups of the most multifarious kinds. The affair of Colonel Neves, COPCON's No. 2, afforded an insight into the often dubious means whereby so-called "resolutions of the base" are brought about. It transpired that what had been presented as a plenary assembly of the commando regiment which passed a vote of no confidence in the colonel and his moderate aides, causing them to be suspended by Carvalho, had been the manipulative conclave of a very small Communist group. The expulsion vote was therefore rescinded a few days later at a meeting attended by *every* member of the regiment. Such a reversal has not occurred in other similar instances only because the victims shunned publicity and (unlike the doughty Neves) quietly accepted their reprimand, or because the activist minority used methods intimidatory enough to nip all opposition in the bud.

ONLY IN THE LIGHT of such events can one understand the anti-Communist revolt which erupted in mid-July and spread like wildfire through the traditionally Catholic, peasant-farming and conservative-minded North of Portugal, as well as some central areas. There is no doubt that a variety of impulses underlay this mounting spate of attacks on the offices of Communist or pro-Communist organisations, Communist-dominated (and in no way democratically legitimised) local councils, and even on the homes, persons and property of individual functionaries. Mobs were swelled by indignant local socialists; other outrages were committed by frenzied supporters of the Church; and some incidents were undoubtedly engineered by beneficiaries of the old régime and country notables of distinctly "counter-revolutionary" bent. It is quite clear that these disturbances fully expressed the impatience of a population which not only felt disappointment at the concrete results of "the Revolution" but jibbed at the way in which the military rulers and their civilian protégés so blithely disregarded the wishes, needs and demands of those very "masses" whom they themselves had invoked. If this protest found its outlet in "direct action", it was because left-wing extremists of the most varied hue had previously and amply demonstrated the authorities' inability to cope with such methods. The same general lack of decision was revealed by the new storm from

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Right. Most of the military contingents dispatched to quell it maintained a passive stance, and some even fraternised with the crowds.

This was not merely because the troops stationed in the North are dominated by "moderates." Another factor was also operative. Memories of the repressive features of Salazarism are still so fresh that soldiers and policemen alike shrink from using force on "the people" even when they condemn its activities. For a considerable period, only the Left profited from this reluctance. Last summer for the first time, right-wingers discovered and adroitly exploited its inherent possibilities. But this implied nothing more (or less) than that anarchical conditions were expanding in more and more sections of society. As the manifesto of the nine "moderate" Revolutionary Council members phrased it on 7 August: "the traditional social fabric is rent, but not even the rudiments of any new structures have taken shape. . . ."

The Socialist and PPD resignations from the Cabinet were, first and foremost, a reaction to the disastrous loss of authority incurred by the government and Revolutionary Council. This was manifested not only in the *República* affair and in the MFA Assembly's endeavour to mortgage the prospective constitution, even before it had been worked out, by reverting to a nebulous system of "local soviets" which was quite incompatible with a democratic constitution of any kind. Indeed, by insisting that these "people's councils" should take over local and regional administrative responsibilities and thus supplant the traditional organs of local government, and by stipulating that all decisions should be carried by show of hands (which opened up possibilities of manipulation by close-knit and resolute minorities), the MFA representatives had made it clear that they wanted to undercut the work of the Constitutional Assembly. As this endeavour could only be a first move towards the dissolution of this elected body, it exacerbated an already patent incapacity to govern. This at once became apparent when the government crisis spawned a new Gonçalves cabinet from which Carvalho promptly and pointedly dissociated himself and to which Gomes disparagingly referred, at the very moment of swearing-in, as a "transitional solution."

EVEN SO, the formation of the new cabinet (the fifth within 15 months and the fourth headed by Gonçalves) was hailed by the Communist-dominated press and the other mass media as a guarantee of the "advance of the Revolution." Exclusively composed of more or less (usually less) prominent PCP sympathisers, with a sprinkling of genuine but ingenuous left-wing independents, it seemed destined to prepare the way for the final Communist take-over.

If this amounted to a Communist victory, it was a hollow one from the start; the government's bases were simply too narrow to withstand the hostility it evoked not only in the population but in the ranks of the Armed Forces as well. Gonçalves had some success when he tried to whip up popular support among the workers of the industrial belt around Lisbon by aggressive revolutionary rhetoric, and the influential Fifth Division (the propaganda instrument of the MFA which had fallen completely under Communist control) went all out with an intense "personality cult" campaign on behalf of the Prime Minister. But he could make no headway. Nor did the Cabinet's hectic legislative activity greatly help to dissemble its fundamental weakness and isolation. Most of the innumerable decrees pouring out in an endless stream never reached the statute book —because President Costa Gomes never signed them. Desperately fighting on for political survival when the game was already lost, Gonçalves appeared, towards the end, a pathetic figure.

Indeed, by his frantic clinging to power, he hastened rather than staved off his downfall. In July, when the Socialists first insisted on his resignation as a *conditio sine qua non* for their collaboration with a future government, it was considered by many observers to be a tactical blunder. They feared that by personalising the political controversy and by making Gonçalves the scapegoat, Mario Soares might provoke the majority of the Armed Forces Movement into a reaction of solidarity with their comrade. This could have happened. But things went the other way simply because Gonçalves, in his obstinate attempts to block all compromise solutions, estranged even those who, in the beginning, had felt bound to support him. By September, the Communists themselves realised after much wavering that their pet general had turned from a useful instrument into an obstacle to their policy. They finally dropped him without much formality.

THE DECISIVE TURNING-POINT was undoubtedly the break-up of the old unity within the MFA. For a long time, this unity had become increasingly threadbare. Captain Vasco Lourenço, former member and spokesman of the Revolutionary Council and the main organiser among its nine "dissidents", made this clear later when he recalled how he and his friends had finally become tired of giving in, time and again,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the pro-Communist faction in the name of consensus, while the followers of the PCP never thought of honouring the compromises once they were reached. For different reasons, the wild men on the Far Left, too, were growing restless. Their most important man, General Carvalho, not only addressed a scathing letter to Gonçalves but actually threw his considerable weight behind the nine rebels who had been excluded from the Revolutionary Council for publishing their manifesto. With them, he did his best to remove the Prime Minister and thereby to cut back the over-grown influence of the Communist Party. And if this flirtation with the movement's right wing aroused deep distrust among some ideologically more advanced and tactically less volatile COPCON officers, these men objected no less strongly to the PCP line. Their basic document—worked out in close contact with some civilian ideologists of "Workers' Power" gathered around the PRP (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat) and the so-called Revolutionary Brigades—is just as devastating an indictment of the Communist strategy and its practical results as the Melo Antunes manifesto to which this "Revolutionary Self-Critique and Working Proposal for a Political Programme" was meant as a Left-wing answer. In this respect, at least, the two papers were not so much antagonistic as complementary.

THUS THE COPCON PAPER contains a detailed list of blunders committed in the first 15 months of the Revolution. The authors attribute the responsibility for these to "the climate of discouragement and disbelief among the People that has turned them away from a Revolution in which they were principally and most directly interested." Among the reasons for the anti-Communist riots is listed the failure of the "enlightenment" and "dynamisation" campaigns in the rural areas (mainly by the Fifth Division) which were undertaken "without adequate preparation, frequently without respecting the social-cultural characteristics of the environment in which they were undertaken" or even leading to "authentic violations of the persons' conscience and habits." Even more serious is the denunciation of the "favouritism" rampant in the Local Governments, and in the newly-created leagues of small and medium agriculturists, where benefits were exclusively reserved "to the followers of the political line of the dominating persons", *i.e.* of the Communist cadres and their sympathisers within the MDP (the Portuguese Democratic Movement) who had taken control of these institutions. Looking at this background, keeping in mind the economic disintegration which has affected the countryside much more than the strongly organised blue- and white-collar workers of the town, the ultra-Leftists now find it regrettable but completely understandable that

> the increasing discontent has been exploited by the Reaction who, manipulating and utilising this highly justified mood of dissatisfaction, have managed to provoke an escalation of violence and contestation and lead the people into open opposition to the MFA by identifying it with the political line responsible for this situation. . . .

To the extent that this can be called an analysis it is certainly correct as far as it goes. In less detailed and more abstract but also more comprehensive terms, the Nine came to similar jargonised conclusions. They pointed at the ("already imminent") danger of a rupture between the MFA and the majority of the Portuguese people.

> Day by day, the abyss is opening more widely between an extremely minoritarian social group [part of the proletariat in the Lisbon zone and part of the proletariat in the Alentejo], supporters of certain revolutionary projects, and practically all the rest of the country which reacts violently to the changes that a certain revolutionary vanguard pretends to impose."

The two groups, of course, diverged widely in the conclusions they drew from their similar analyses. To the "Nine Moderates", it seemed self-evident that the Revolution could only succeed by combining the "transition to socialism" with political democracy which would safeguard fundamental freedoms and human rights. The extreme Left-wing officers, on the other hand, pleaded for an even more radical revolution. They wanted the handing over of power to workers', tenants', peasants' and other popular committees (a kind of Soviet system shorn of Communist hegemony), and while the Nine had voiced some misgivings about "a rhythm of nationalisation impossible to absorb", their COPCON antagonists stressed the impossibility of "leaving the means of production in the hands of the bourgeoisie." The ultra-Left denounced the "moderates" as Social Democrats even though the Nine had made it clear, in their Manifesto, that they considered any "repetition of the Social Democratic experiences" to be a "tragic error"—since, according to these up-to-date sociologists, there was no room in Portugal for "the classical schemes of advanced capitalism." The Nine in turn lashed out against "Anarchism and Populism which lead, inevitably, to the catastrophic dissolution of the state."

The attempt to conciliate these contradictory points of view was bound to fail. Thus it was perfectly natural that the negotiations between the two oppositionist camps within the MFA

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

came to nought. Even when Carvalho had already reached an agreement with Melo Antunes about superseding the last Gonçalves government by a cabinet under Army Chief-of-Staff General Fabiao, he could not convince his own followers, and had to back down from this compromise. It is characteristic of the often surrealistic quality of Portuguese ideological debate that certain military units managed to pronounce themselves first in favour of the Antunes Manifesto and then, a few days later, to support equally strongly the diametrically opposite COPCON document. In the end, after intense discussions on all military levels, a clear majority of the Armed Forces came out in favour of the moderate thesis against both the pro-Communist government line and the platform of the radical Left.

While the issue still hung in the balance, it looked as if the conflict would have to be decided by force of arms. For some time, politicians of all camps had conjured up the spectre of civil war. The greater the polarisation in the ranks of the Armed Forces, the more the violent clash appeared unavoidable. Indeed, each of the battling factions must have felt tempted, at one time or another, to mobilise for such a test of strength. Yet the spectre did not materialise. The main reason for this was the strength shown by the movement of opinion in favour of the Antunes group. Having won over, at the very least, two-thirds of the Army and the Air Force (and more than 75% of the officers in these two services), the Nine were certain of achieving their goal without resorting to force. The Communists recognised the risks of armed resistance, and finally gave in with some grace. As for the ultra-Left, it still felt too weak, and too suspicious of its potential Communist ally in the event of insurrection. Thus the struggle was decided, as it were, by a mere counting of heads. The outcome was a compromise heavily weighted in favour of the "moderates": the final dropping of Gonçalves; the formation of a new cabinet under Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo in which the main parties, for the first time, were represented according to their parliamentary strength; the dissolution of the triumvirate; and the complete "restructuring" of both the Revolutionary Council and the MFA Assembly.

WITH ALL THE MILITARY-POLITICAL organs formally in the hands of the "moderates", and the Communists reduced to just one of the seven party representatives in the Cabinet, this outcome gives the impression of an all-out victory for "the democratic forces." Certainly the PCP, having come very close to its aim of securing total power, is now further from this goal than it has been since 25 April 1974. But whether this new set-up will prove more stable than the former provisional arrangements and alignments is far from certain. It may be a first step towards a workable solution of the "revolutionary crisis"; it may equally be just another fleeting and illusory episode.

FOR THE MAIN PROBLEMS still lie ahead so long as the problem of all-pervading anarchy has not been tackled, let alone settled. Up to now, change has only occurred at the top of the political structure. It has still to be shown whether the new organs can exert and consolidate a more real authority than the earlier ones. With the Communists participating in the government and yet half in opposition, with the extreme Left arming its hosts and still gaining in influence on the rank-and-file of an army in which even the semblance of discipline has completely dissolved, and with economic disaster threatening, the hopes that have been aroused by the reversal of the earlier trend could quickly be dampened. The process of disintegration has gone on not only in the Armed Forces but in the whole governmental apparatus as well. Unless this process can be stemmed the risk of new upheavals remains.

The main argument by which the Communists have justified acceptance of their relegation to a minor role has been "the danger of a right-wing *coup*." This danger is taken fairly seriously by the moderates, too; they realise—and some of their spokesmen have actually said so quite openly—that much of their support among the officers' corps as well as among the civilian population has come from "reactionaries" of a definitely anti-Communist hue. Any new trouble from the Left or any deterioration in the state of the economy may further strengthen the already swelling ranks of "Spinolist" right-wing semi-democrats and of those nostalgic for Salazarism. The civil war which has been avoided this time may still come about with a vengeance.

The trend to radicalisation—and the whole ideological theatre of the absurd to which a real country with real interests has been subjected—could probably have been stopped earlier if Portugal's Western allies had shown more determination to help the new-fledged democracy at a stage when it still showed signs of health. If the NATO powers were unable to make up their mind, it was mainly because some of them—the leading American politicians above all—took an utterly fatalistic view of probable Portuguese developments. Had not Dr Henry Kissinger expressed his firm opinion, early this year, that Portugal would, within twelve months, go "either Communist or Neutralist"? This silly statement by a usually far from silly statesman

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can only be explained by a kind of conditioned reflex: revolutions, it implies, are bound to go the Communist way or, at least, to run against Western interests. Thus Washington delayed its own assistance at a time when it could have had a maximum economic and political effect, and it also actively discouraged the Western European governments. And as, for once, the French took the same stand, all the discussions about "aid to Portugal" got stuck—till the moment when it seemed clear even to the optimists that this aid would come too late and when all the conservative parties began, with apparent justice, to protest loudly against "throwing money away on a Communist régime."

It is worth recalling this at the present moment. Recent developments have opened up a new opportunity for the West to keep Portugal within its fold—if not as a "reliable ally" then at least as a well-meaning enfeebled friend. It would be a tragedy if this chance were to be missed again. It does not matter very much, at least in my view, whether the kind of socialism that people like Mario Soares and Melo Antunes are striving for is necessarily the best social system for Portugal. It is even less important whether it is to the liking of Western conservatives (Gerald Ford or Giscard d'Estaing) or even of Social Democrats like Helmut Schmidt. What should really be kept in mind is the necessity to avoid, on the far west of the European continent, the emergence of a new Cuba or a new Chile. And, to a large extent, this will depend on the resilience of Western statesmanship.

WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN, one thing is certain. The revolutionary enthusiasm of 25 April 1974 is dead beyond resurrection. I am still haunted by the thought of a little placard which caught my eye amid the countless flags and banners at this year's May Day rally in Lisbon. *We must not let our carnations wither!* ran its inscription, clumsily daubed upon the white fabric. The touching exhortation was in vain. The carnations have already wilted.

## At the pool

Not many even dared to start the climb,
I remember. It meant dodging the old lame
Attendant who never let children up there.

Forty-two feet, I think they said it was,
Into fifteen feet of unheated sea-water,
And because of the war there weren't even railings

On the steps or at the top. But those were glory
Days—1946 and a military
Band playing *Nights of Gladness* and I was up

There alone before I knew it, scared
Shitless, my friends signalling it was clear,
And I jumped. I jumped. That smack of soles and palms!

From the café and terraces above the pool
A round of cheerful applause from onlookers
And I was hero. I tell my wife all this.

And now, thirty-eight, sitting on that same
Terrace, drinking tea, trying to keep
My children from drawing attention to themselves,

I watch the pool like a hawk, praying
That no sodding little yobbo will try
To show off by going up those steps.

*Christopher Wiseman*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# LETTERS

## Indestructible Illusions?

YOUR COLUMNIST *R* consoles himself, and would console others, with the thought that, though "the balance has tipped decisively to the disadvantage of the West . . . in Europe", still "even here . . . history has not worked entirely to the advantage of the Soviet Union, for the means and the methods by which she has imposed and maintained her domination . . . have been such as to destroy almost totally the credibility of her claim to represent the cause of the oppressed peoples of the earth."

Readers of ENCOUNTER, and still more, writers for it, have no business so to delude themselves into pretending that what so clearly ought to be the case in fact is. For if there are any other illusions as indestructibly perennial as those about the righteousness of the first socialist state, these are the equally perennial illusions that some egregious monstrosity, or some accumulation of monstrosities, in the conduct of Soviet and other Communists will in fact permanently and irreparably discredit their obscene pretensions. And *R* himself, at the beginning of this same September column, discusses a painful example showing the falsity of his own complacent conclusion:

> When the AFL-CIO wishes to honour a foreign visitor they choose the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn; when the TUC does, it invites the ex-KGB chief Alexander Shelepin.

To twist the knife a little further, we should reflect that twenty or even ten years ago our TUC would not have considered entertaining the *Führer* of the Soviet *Arbeitsfront*, even if he had not also happened to be a former controller of the Gulag Archipelago. But then twenty years ago the leader of the Labour Party would not have visited Prague to recommend that everyone should forget the Soviet "normalisation" of Czechoslovakia. And even in this last week in which *R*'s words were published Mrs Judith Hart, for many years a Labour Government Minister, visited Portugal to declare her solidarity with the Portuguese Stalinists and their allies, and her opposition to those "fascists" who are daring to resist a further extension of the Socialist Bloc. Mrs Judith Hart, MP, and her companion Mrs Audrey Wise, MP, are conspicuously not, as I'm sure *R* will join me in wishing they were, in trouble with their local Labour Parties.

ANTONY FLEW

*Reading University*

## Baader-Meinhof & Nazi Words

THERE is no doubt, as M. J. Lasky points out in his article on the Baader-Meinhof gang [ENCOUNTER, June], an insensitivity on the German terroristic Left to the lingering usages of Nazi vocabulary. Words and phrases out of the Hitlerian past keep cropping up in their speeches and manifestos as they attempt to do many of the same things—justifying illegality, rationalising violence, apologising for murder.

But it may not all be simple semantic insensitivity. Ulrike Meinhof was always a skilled manipulator of language, and it may well be that they have deliberately chosen certain categories from the Nazi ideology for their shock value, to harden themselves against all counter-attack, to force the public to get used to the idea of the iron (and even cynical) ruthlessness of the revolutionary vanguard. We do know that some of the young fellow-travellers were upset by what Lasky calls the "re-Nazification" of the German political vocabulary. And I now note that at least one member of the Baader-Meinhof gang put this point in his list of objections to the so-called pure Marxist-Leninist leadership.

There is in the August number of *Das da* (Hamburg), Klaus-Rainer Röhl's successor magazine to his notorious *Konkret*—"restructured" from under his nose by an oppositionist radical fraction—a document prepared in prison by Gerhard Müller, who was Ulrike Meinhof's last companion in the underground before the German police made their sweeping arrests in June 1972. It is entitled "NIE WIEDER RAF!" (RAF being the so-called *Rote Armee Fraktion*), and Müller complains that the gang from which he now disassociates himself has only brought discredit on the idea of a radical Left. One of the points he makes is in connection with the brutal murder of young Ulrich Schmücker, found "executed" in Berlin's Grunewald last year. The purge was carried out by his own comrades who had (or thought they had) reason to mistrust him. The decision to rub him out was made on the Left by a "*Volksgericht*", a people's court. And the phrase which Müller finds disgusting was the same one used by the Nazis in their trials, especially of the 20th of July anti-Nazi resistance. Similarly, the kidnappers of Peter Lorenz in Berlin put him into a "*Volksgefängnis*", a people's prison. As the ex-member of the Baader-Meinhof group tries to remind his old comrades, this was the language of Freisler, Hitler's special judge for executions. He quotes the bitter words of the poet Erich Fried, "... Freisler is listening, all ears, in his grave and murmuring: 'ah a People's Court again, *Heil Hitler*!' "

JÜRGEN HAMM

*Bonn*

## Two Mills, or One

I DO NOT SUPPOSE that even Professor Maurice Cranston's lucid and elegant essay will persuade your readers that they wish for a second review of Miss Himmelfarb's *On Liberty and Liberalism*. But, may I suggest that when he quite rightly praised the great brilliance of her book, he should have been a good deal fiercer in emphasising the perversity of the enterprise to which that brilliance was devoted?

Miss Himmelfarb essentially sets out to answer the question: Why did Mill write the essay *On Liberty*, when that essay contradicts everything else he ever



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wrote? Now, this, like the famous enquiry into the wife-beating habits of the accused, begs the crucial question—is *On Liberty* doctrinally at odds with everything else Mill wrote?

It seems clear to me that it is wholly of a piece with the rest of Mill's work, and that the obvious tensions in it are the very same as the tensions which run throughout Mill's work; they are, so to speak, tensions integral to Mill's attempt to reconcile the rationalist and utilitarian desire to simplify the moral life with his Goethean commitment to "many-sidedness." As elsewhere, Mill wants to reconcile self-reliance and the claims of an élite to moral authority; he wants to denounce Christian self-abnegation, without sapping the general sense of duty; he wants to emphasise the right and duty of governments to pursue utilitarian reforms, without permitting them to employ the "Prussian" methods which appealed to bureaucrats like Edwin Chadwick; he looks forward to the day when all instructed persons will agree on standards of human excellence, but refuses to hasten its arrival by a Comtean dictatorship.

In all this, we see the same Mill as wrote *Utilitarianism*, the last chapters of the *Political Economy*, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, and so on. Why Miss Himmelfarb chooses to read *On Liberty* as a dreadful warning about the excesses of the American Left, I cannot think; Harriet Taylor seems a very queer candidate for the role of the begetter of bra-burning. But, even more incomprehensible is the way she simply ignores the scholarly efforts of such writers as

## *Words, Words, Words (II)*

IN MY LONG *and varied experience as both a marker of essays and a marker-up of typescripts, the seven blunders of the world—I refer to common misspellings — are as follows:*

| | |
|---|---|
| LIAISON | **liason** |
| IRRESISTIBLE | **irresistable** |
| COMPARATIVE | **comparitive** |
| CEMETERY | **cemetary** |
| ACCOMMODATION | **accomodation** |
| ACCUMULATION | **accummulation** |
| SEPARATE | **seperate** |

*One would expect to grow immune to such petty irritations as misspellings, but I find that some part of my psyche has grown ever more tender and that, in particular, the instances I have listed cause new pain on each appearance. One function of an editor is to look out for fresh genius, so if there is truth in the theory that inability to spell is a sign of genius, I am not well placed to recognise genius when it is right under my nose.*

THE MORE HUMANE **will argue that misspelling is a sign of nothing but misspelling—or only of carelessness, which in its turn is a sign of nothing more than carelessness. But surely the last thing a writer should be careless about is** *words*, **the medium in which he works, just as the last thing a carpenter should be careless about is wood. Dictionaries exist; they are excellent books and relatively inexpensive. And what I resent is the writer's lordly assumption that someone else can put his tiny mistakes right, either the editor or the printer or some other dull hireling. In fact there are printers who not only put right spelling errors and grammatical solecisms but even query material inconsistencies—on page 3 the hero is said to possess masses of raven hair, on page 57 he is described as ginger-haired and balding. Yet how many of these literary geniuses would deign to wish a mere printer the time of day?**

**Indiscreet though it may be, I must confess that when I read a typescript and find those seven deadly words all or even mostly spelt correctly, I feel so gratified that the typescript is already half-way to acceptance. Only half-way. But—when we think of the rate at which typescripts pour into a publisher's office—even half-way is a long way.**

MISSPELLING SEEMS TO BE *on the increase, beyond the capacity of editors and printers to cope with it, perhaps as part of the general breakdown of law and order, or as a consequence of the curious enthusiasm we have witnessed of late for doing things one's own way—rather than the best way. Possibly this orthographical free-for-all is connected with the practice in some schools of encouraging children to do their own thing without also teaching them how other people have done the thing in question. One term for that practice is "the fostering of individuality." Another is "ingratiating slackness." The major writer knows the rules, whether of spelling, grammar, public taste or official policy; he knows what the penalties for breaking them are; and then he breaks them if and when he must. I have an uneasy feeling that, without the ever-present penalties, no great writing will emerge.*

*What have I learnt from working in publishing? Two things at least: that the practice of writing is absolutely necessary to mankind; everybody has to write. And that the practice of reading is* not; *not everybody feels compelled to read.*

WHAT I'VE SAID **must sound horribly self-righteous. So let me add that there are quite a few words I have to look up in the dictionary every single time I use them. One of them is—"misspelling."**

***D. J. Enright***

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Wollheim and Donald Brown, who have done so much to show not only that *On Liberty* was of a piece with the rest of Mill's work, but just how it was.

ALAN RYAN

*New College, Oxford*

## Sufism

IT WOULD BE A PITY if the concentration of your correspondents James Moore and Michael Currer-Briggs on some unfortunate errors in L. P. Elwell-Sutton's otherwise admirable article "Sufism and Pseudo-Sufism" [ENCOUNTER, May] were allowed to obscure the article's importance. Orientalists have long been wise to "pseudo-Sufism." Indeed the term was first applied to the work of Idries Shah by Professor Seyyed Hossen Nasr in a review of Shah's *The Sufis* published in *Islamic Studies* as long ago as 1964. However, scholars can be neglectful of non-specialist readers, and it is greatly to Mr Elwell-Sutton's credit that he has assumed his responsibilities towards the general public.

While working on my historical study of Gurdjieff and his followers (*The Harmonious Circle*, forthcoming from Thames & Hudson and G. P. Putnam's Sons) I discovered that certain people formerly associated with Gurdjieff and Ouspensky held Idries Shah to be a continuator of the activity begun by Gurdjieff. This point of view appeared to be baseless —a fact which would be enough to explain the concern of James Moore and Michael Currer-Briggs. But I should like to suggest an additional reason why anyone would be anxious to dissociate himself from Idries Shah. This is the curious attitude of Shah's supporters, exemplified by your third correspondent, David L. Pendlebury (Letters, August).

Mr Pendlebury's defence of Idries Shah rests on the appeal to authority favoured by other sympathisers like Doris Lessing. He relies heavily on a recently-published symposium, *Sufi Studies: East and West*. At first sight this volume is an imposing testimonial to the influence of Idries Shah. But it is not necessary to read far before smelling a rat of a very familiar kind.

The foreword to *Sufi Studies* is by Sir Edwin Chapman-Andrews. It consists of an anecdote about the comic figure Mullah Nasreddin who is the subject of so many books by Idries Shah. As in Shah's own books there is no acknowledgement of any source for the tale. In fact, it is to be found as the opening item in a collection of Nasreddin stories translated by George Borrow and published posthumously in 1884, under the title of *The Turkish Jester*. What is more, the tale was known in English fifty years earlier, and was printed in the Christmas number of *The Athenaeum* for 1834. So it is clear that Sir Edwin's foreword is merely a re-casting of well-known material.

This is of more than passing interest when we remember the history of the "translation" of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam which Idries Shah's brother Omar persuaded Robert Graves to versify (see the article by Anthony Dickins in *The London Magazine* for August/September). Mr Elwell-Sutton has proved conclusively that the origin of the manuscript on which Omar Ali Shah claimed to base his translation was the commentary on Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* published by the Victorian scholar Edward Heron-Allen!

A new example of borrowing from long-published sources scarcely establishes what Mr Pendlebury claims is "Shah's pre-eminence in the Sufi field." On the contrary, it seems to indicate that we should turn elsewhere for enlightenment on such matters.

JAMES WEBB

*London*

MR ELWELL-SUTTON'S EXPOSURE of Idries Shah's epigonous Sufism—as symptomatic of Western dis-occidentation as the debased Isis-worship imported into Petronian Rome—was most welcome. The "religious attitude", without God, leads to personal or collective egoism: the Son of Man turns into Manson, Sufism into a charlatan's mantle.

Perhaps the shortest insight into Shah's pretensions comes from an examination of what he has to say about Muhieddin Ibn al-'Arabi in his best-selling *Sufism*. This establishes that at the time of writing his awareness of the greatest Western Master—for despite his later residence in Mecca and Damascus, Ibn al-'Arabi derived from Spain—depended on sources already Englished. There are no quotations from the still untranslated *Futuhat al-Makkiyah* (*The Spiritual Conquests of Mecca*), probably the greatest compendium of Sufi writing in existence. Numerous manuscripts of this work exist, however, in Istanbul. From them Dr 'Uthman Yehia has already produced, in Cairo, the first volumes of what is planned as a 37-volume edition. The work contains (to give an idea of its importance) 12,000 lines of hitherto unedited poetry by one who, while accepting the validity of Torah and Gospel, never wavered in his Muslim devotion, centred as this is on the Absolute, the Uncreated.

Shah has done, in other words, what he did with the *Rubaiyat*: deferred, to the point of absurdity, to previous western writers who happened not to have got round to the Futuhat: in the case of the *Rubaiyat* he gave himself away by following FitzGerald's personal ordering of the quatrains.

DESMOND STEWART

*Norfolk*

**MAIL ORDER—ANY BOOKS**

We supply on request any books, English and American—we order immediately any title direct from publisher and despatch books at once to any address in the UK and Overseas.

Please forward your order for speedy service and personal attention to:

**ENGLISH CONTINENTAL BOOK MARKET LTD**

57A Brent Street, London NW4, England
or telephone 202 9248

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## "The Look of the Land"

ALEC CLIFTON-TAYLOR (ENCOUNTER, April), like most historians of landscape and landscape architects (including the otherwise admirable Nan Fairbrother), glosses over the antiquity and complexity of our countryside with the hoary old generalisation that "a millennium ago almost the whole of England . . . was more or less covered with trees." The "forest *sauvage*" is a romantic concept, no doubt appealing to admirers of *The Once and Future King* but with not much more historical accuracy than the rest of that superb flight of fancy. There is a distinct tendency for our landscape architects not to see the wood for the trees.

Mr Clifton-Taylor quite rightly pays his respects, in passing, to Dr W. G. Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape*, but hurries on to the sunlit parks of the 18th century. It is indeed often said that the English landscape is basically a creation of this period, but this is not just an over-simplification—it is plain wrong. Even the parks themselves had seen their heyday in the late medieval period, hardly with Vanbrugh. Landscape studies have been revolutionised by the realisation, as a result of fieldwork along motorway lines, aerial survey and the work of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, that this country has been intensively utilised by man since prehistoric times. Sites are so thick on the ground in most areas of Southern Britain that the concept of the "site" itself needs to be reassessed; archaeologists should begin to think in terms of reconstructing ancient landscapes, and not merely tiny elements within them.

It has been appreciated for many years that the chalklands of Southern England represent an environment on which the impact of man has been considerable since the fourth millennium B.C. Yet even in Wessex our perception of the scale of prehistoric man's activities has been enlarged by the realisation that large areas of Downland are covered with slight earthworks, a tracery of veins which make up large blocks of *planned* prehistoric fields—at Kingscombe in Dorset, for example, Middle Bronze Age fields cover 800 hectares. Cropmarks revealed by aerial photography indicate that the utilisation of the land was not less intense on the gravel terraces of the major rivers and on the limestone uplands. Even the more intransigent and apparently inhospitable claylands were exploited—an average of four Romano-British settlements per mile along the M5 route through the Keuper Marls of South Gloucestershire, including Romano-British arable fields.

Recent work by botanists, soil scientists and entomologists has built on the foundations laid by Professor Harry Godwin (*The History of British Flora*, 1956, etc.) and Hans Helbaek. The evidence of surviving pollen combined with radio-carbon dating is showing that *landnam* or tree clearance phases are complex and take place in many areas from Neolithic or even, it now seems, from Mesolithic times. The increasing use of snails and insects found in ancient sites is supplementing the more traditional archaeological evidence for early forest clearance and extensive manipulation of the landscape certainly by the late Iron Age.

The failure to appreciate the extent of ancient Man's role in the formation of our landscape means in present-day terms that planners, local authorities, Forestry Commissioners and farmers may be insensitive to the nuances and character of our countryside, on which they can have such a drastic effect. This is well illustrated by the almost total neglect of what one might term "the historic environment" in the recent Countryside Commission report, *New Agricultural Landscapes*. As an archaeologist I appreciate that we as a group must accept a large slice of the blame for failing to put across this less glamorous aspect of our subject. As I write this letter from my site office, we are currently excavating a very mundane-looking field boundary of an apparently 18th-century enclosure. In fact beneath it lies a medieval ditch, a boundary of the arable land of Abingdon Abbey, which itself replaced a 5th-century Romano-British field division; the whole area has been extensively exploited for over 5,000 years. All the slight clues for this evolution will soon be obliterated by a moraine of high-density housing.

There is little about the English landscape, a human artifact if ever there was one, that has to do with the "spontaneous arrangements of nature", but perhaps if we try to understand the complete anatomy a little better we might be able to operate with a little more "taste."

DAVID MILES

*Woodstock,*
*Oxfordshire*

## Reply to Chomsky

I NEVER MEANT to suggest [ENCOUNTER, January] that it was necessary for Professor Chomsky to adminster artificial respiration (or is it inspiration?) to enliven student protest at MIT and elsewhere. In our quibble over words I still believe it is fair to say that he did, indeed, help to inspire the American anti-War movement. He did so at times in an intellectually irresponsible way, by writing propaganda in a sarcastic tone and passing it off as serious history. Nevertheless, he did exert considerable influence.

Professor Chomsky maintains [ENCOUNTER, November] that the only conceivable reason why MIT even bothered to consider reappointing W. W. Rostow was his former association with the Institute. In a public statement on the controversy Rostow said that "no university was under a legal, moral, or any other kind of obligation" to offer him a position. "I do not know", he wrote, "to what extent—if any—views I have held as a public servant—or am believed to have held—may, or may not, have affected the judgment of various faculties." Yet as James Reston noted:

> "Professors who have shared the secrets of state in the White House Operations Room are usually welcomed back, no matter how long they have been away, but in Rostow's case the economics faculty at MIT debated the issue long and hard and came up with the academic equivalent of one large blackball." (*New York Times*, 6 December 1968).

And why was this exception made? According to Professor Chomsky, extra-academic considerations played no perceptible part in MIT's resolution against reappointing Rostow. It is true enough that the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Oxford*

**HORROR NOVEL: Oxford University is to vote again on whether to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law on Mr Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan. Congregation decided by 155 votes to 153 against conferring eight honorary degrees, including one on Mr Bhutto.**

**Two votes have been declared invalid by the Vice-chancellor and the proctors, and the result, they have decided, should be regarded as a tie. The ineligible voters were two Masters of Arts who are research students and not members of Congregation. The Vice-chancellor has a casting vote, but it is too late for him to use it.**

**The registrar said yesterday: "It is a situation without precedent in Oxford. If it had been the plot of a novel it would have been implausible."**

**After the vote it was pointed out to the two research students that they were not eligible to vote. "We are full of horror at what they had done especially since the vote was so close."**

THE TIMES

*Kampala*

QUOTEMANSHIP: *General Yakubu Gowon, ousted as leader of Nigeria on Tuesday while he was attending the Organisation of African Unity summit conference in Uganda, bowed out of world politics yesterday with a smile, great dignity and a quotation from "As You Like It" which included the line: "They have their exits and their entrances."*

*As he rose to leave, there were shouts of "Where will you go now?" It was then that he introduced his Shakespearean lines, slightly misquoted.*

*"Now gentlemen, may I say this. You know what Shakespeare said:*

*All the world is a stage*
*And all the men and women merely players*
*They have their exits and their entrances. . . .*

*Then General Gowon waved a hand and said: "And quote and quote and quote." He chose to omit the fourth line in Jaques' speech, "And one man in his time plays many parts."*

*The Britons in his audience were thrown into instant confusion over which of Shakespeare's plays the lines came from. One man insisted they came from "The Tempest", another was sure they were from "King Lear." Even more confused, though, were the Swedish and Chinese journalists, who looked completely blank at the reference. When the quotation and its aptness were explained to one girl reporter, she said, "Oh dear, however can I translate that into Swedish?"*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

*Orono, Maine*

**NO MEAT, 7 VEG: Occasionally the vegetarians here at the World Vegetarian Congress will argue among themselves, usually good-naturedly, over which is the "true way."**

**There are fruitarians here, who eat only fruit; ovo-lacto vegetarians, who eat eggs, milk and cheese in addition to vegetarian fare; vegans, who use no food or clothing from the animal kingdom; natural hygienists, who do not use salt, sugar, refined flour or condiments, and do not believe in combining fruits and vegetables in meals; the Jain vegetarians from India, who do not use any food that grows below ground, such as potatoes and carrots; and the Nanadhari Sikhs from India, who won't drink water drawn through a pipe. They get their water from wells.**

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

*Scarborough*

SEEKING & FINDING: *Eight times during the morning and early afternoon before the crucial pay debate, Arthur Scargill led his Yorkshire Miners delegation out of the conference hall to confer in obscure anterooms and corridors.*

*This concentrated deliberation was over the exact meaning of the word "seek", which had been suggested as a compromise, and its relative merits against the words "demand" and "objective". "Demand", it was felt, meant "We want £100 now, or else." "Objective" was deemed to mean "We think '£100 miner' has a catchy ring to it, but we don't mind waiting until the Government says we can have it."*

*Then some anonymous tactician discovered the word "seek", which was taken to mean: "We shall ask for £100 immediately, and if we don't get it we shall, er . . . think what to do next."*

*An even more brilliant stroke of double-talk was then thrown up in desperation: "seek to demand." But no one had the slightest idea what that meant, and it was dismissed as silly. The final resolution, which resembled poetry written by a committee, contained the magic formula: "enter into negotiations to seek." The underground philologists were satisfied.*

THE TIMES

*London*

**GAIETY: "Gay" is—or was—a perfectly good, useful, meaningful, English word. During the past few years, however, it has come to possess the additional meaning of "homosexual" or "connected with homosexuality." And, as so often happens, the primary meaning is in danger of being overwhelmed by the secondary one. So that if someone asks "What sort of party was it?" and you reply, "It was rather gay, really" the response is one either of hilarity or, occasionally, of shocked surprise.**

**Actually I approve [writes Alan Watkins] of many of the objectives of the Gay Liberation Movement. But what I should like to do immediately is liberate the word "gay".**

EVENING STANDARD

*London*

**WHO PLANS THE PLANNERS?: "We are sorry that the Planning Directory has so far not appeared. This is because it is considerably bigger than originally anticipated and is taking longer to print" (announcement in the weekly newspaper *Planning*).**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reasons given in 1968 for rejecting Rostow challenged his academic competence: (1) his teaching style was anachronistic; (2) his basic concern was no longer economic history but world politics; and (3) his published scholarship was superficial. But these rationalisations hardly make sense, as I argued in ENCOUNTER (January, pp. 85–86). Nothing in Professor Chomsky's letter persuades me to retract or amend what I wrote then. The fact remains that if Rostow had not been so intimately responsible for planning American military intervention and bombing policy in Viet Nam, it is exceedingly improbable that there would have been any resistance whatsoever to his returning to MIT.

One of the regrettable repercussions of Rostow's pro-War advice is that the American escalation in Viet Nam undermined his credibility as a historian and economist. The academic fashion was, and still is, to ridicule or ignore his intellectual achievements. This is especially unfortunate today, because Rostow is one of the few figures who have had anything both original and realistic to say about inflation. For those persons interested in his current analyses and recommendations, which are unapologetically and refreshingly post-Keynesian, I refer here to two recent articles: "An Anti-Inflation Proposal" (*New York Times*, 18 November 1974) and "The Prices Explosion" (*The Times*, 6 January 1975). Rostow's newest book, *How It All Began*, was published in Britain this year by Methuen.

MICHAEL VANNOY ADAMS

*Brighton*

## "Russians"?

THE LAZINESS of the English intellectual class which saves them from taking the trouble to take the few minutes necessary to learn about the peoples of the world is well established. Accordingly, your reviewer of *The Last Secret* in ENCOUNTER (July) calls the Ukrainians, Belorussians, Jews, Cossacks, Kalmyks, Crimean Tartars, and a small number of Russians repatriated to the Russian Communist régime at the end of the Second World War "Russians." I am surprised.

J. B. GREGOROVICH

*Oakville,*
*Ontario*

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that your correspondents are volubly indignant at what they deem to be the injustice of sending Ukrainians back to the Soviet Union. These men were the most reactionary, pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic of the Russians and fully deserved to be treated as Nazis. Then why the outraged indignation compared with the equanimity with which the murder of Allende and of Communist sympathisers in Chile is accepted?

HENRY ADLER

*London*

# *AUTHORS*

**John McGahern** has published three novels, most recently *The Leavetaking* (Faber, 1974), and a book of short stories.

**Stephen Miller** has written on politics and literature for *Dissent*, *The New Leader*, and *The New York Times Book Review*. A selection of his poems was recently published by Chatto & Windus in their "Treble Poets" series.

**Gavin Ewart's** latest book of poems, *Be My Guest*, has just been published by Trigram Press.

**François Bondy** is an editor of *Die Weltwoche*, Zurich. His recent contributions to ENCOUNTER include "Frantz Fanon" (August 1974) and "As Sartre Grows Old" (November 1974). His "European Notebook" will be appearing regularly in ENCOUNTER.

**Robert Gittings's** most recent book is *Young Thomas Hardy* (Heinemann). An earlier biography, *John Keats* (1968), won the W. H. Smith Literary Award. He is now at work on *The Older Hardy*.

**Roy Fuller's** latest book of poems is *From the Joke Shop* (André Deutsch).

**F. R. Allemann** is a leading Swiss foreign correspondent; he has visited Portugal both before and after the Revolution, and is the author of a book on the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship. He has been a frequent contributor to ENCOUNTER on Germany, the Middle East, and Latin America.

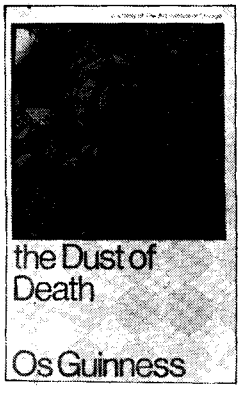
**D. J. Enright** is a Director of Chatto & Windus and a former Editor of ENCOUNTER. His article in this issue is taken from a series of broadcasts, "Words", for Radio 3.

ENCOUNTER Magazine is published in London by Encounter Ltd. (in association with the Open Court Publishing Co.), 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WATMOUGHS LIMITED, IDLE, BRADFORD; AND LONDON

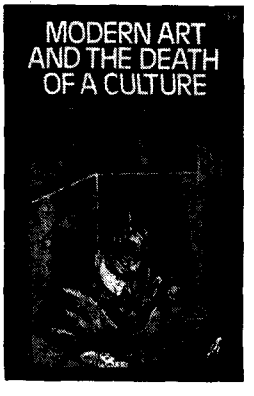
PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THINGS THAT MATTER



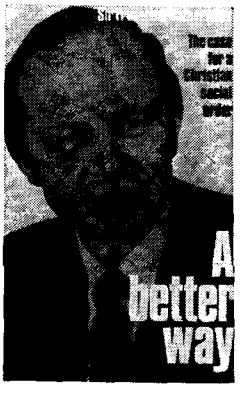

***The dust of death***
*Os Guinness*

*'Of outstanding importance and absorbing interest'* (Expository Times). *Os Guinness charts the journey of a generation—from the technological wasteland into the promised land of radical politics, eastern religion, drugs and the occult.*
**IVP large paperback £1.60**




***Modern art and the death of a culture***
*H R Rookmaaker*

*A book of 'great brilliance and learning'* (*Malcolm Muggeridge in* The Observer). *Professor Rookmaaker of the Free University of Amsterdam analyses works of art against their cultural and sub-cultural backgrounds, building up a devastating yet positive message for our time.*
**IVP large paperback £1.45**




***A better way***
*Sir Frederick Catherwood*

*Sir Frederick speaks out on the problems and failures of modern western society and argues the case for a social order based on Christian principles.*
**IVP large paperback £1.50 Publication 25 November**

**Inter-Varsity Press publishers of fine Christian books**
**39 Bedford Square London WC1B 3EY**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# DYLAN THOMAS

## *POET OF HIS PEOPLE*

## ANDREW SINCLAIR

*Andrew Sinclair, whose lifelong obsession with Dylan Thomas culminated in his directing and writing the film of 'Under Milk Wood', has brilliantly captured the rampaging life-style of the man and the poet.*

*His dream of Wales, the bawling and boozing in Fitzrovia in the thirties and forties, and the American lecture tour that finally killed him in the fifties – all are interwoven in this tragic and exuberant story, superbly illustrated with contemporary photographs.*

***100 b & w photographs £6.25 3 November Michael Joseph***

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED